SHAKESPEARE

HAMLET

LIBRAIRIE HACHETTE

WARNER W. McCONAUGHEY
393 THE FALLS
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30307

HAMLET

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TEXTE ANGLAIS

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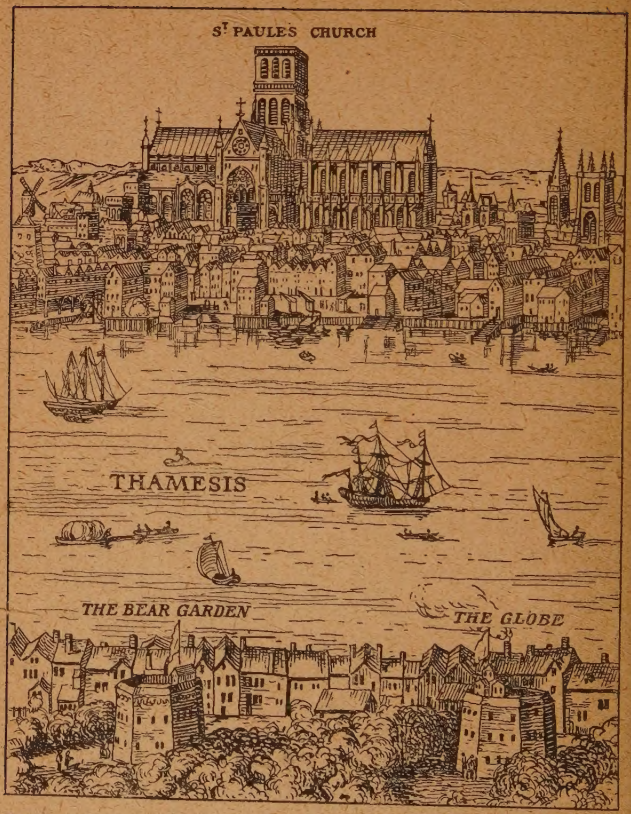
PAR
R. TRAVERS
Professeur de Première Supérieure
Chargé de Cours Complémentaire à la Sorbonne.

LIBRAIRIE HACHETTE
79, BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAIN, PARIS



Le *Bear Garden* (théâtre aussi bien que cirque aux ours), le *Globe*, et sur la rive nord de la Tamise, partie de la Cité, d'après la *Vue* panoramique de Londres publiée en 1616 par le Hollandais Visscher (Bibliothèque Nationale).

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AVANT-PROPOS

Destinée particulièrement aux étudiants, et aux élèves de Première Supérieure, de Philosophie et de Mathématiques, cette édition a été composée avec la pensée constante de leurs besoins et curiosités, de leurs perplexités aussi, que risque de multiplier la hardiesse, croissante depuis un quart de siècle surtout, de la critique shakespearienne. Préciser ce qui est démontrable; guider (sans bander les yeux sur le chemin) vers les points de vue variés d'où se découvrent les aspects les plus significatifs de la pièce; mettre, implicitement du moins, en garde contre d'inévitables mirages, est ce que l'on a tenté.

L'Introduction esquisse l'histoire du sujet jusqu'à Shakespeare et la formation de ce que nous appelons son *Hamlet*.

Des notes, la plupart portent, naturellement, sur la langue; d'autres, sur la constitution du texte; quelques-unes sont prosodiques (d'une scansion que dirige, d'ailleurs, le soin de conserver au vers souplesse[1], non moins que vigueur, expressives); d'autres enfin, historiques, littéraires ou psychologiques. Ordre bien dispersé, pensera-t-on, je le crains, pour celles-ci. Oserai-je espérer qu'à l'épreuve, on ne le jugera pas absence d'ordre; qu'on y percevra même, outre la volonté d'écarter ce que le texte contredit ou résolument ignore, le propos assez ferme d'orienter le lecteur vers des

1. Si j'ai pensé plus prudent, ici, de marquer, *dans les vers*, les disparitions de voyelle dans la terminaison *ed*, les démonstrations serrées de M. Bayfield (*Sh's Versification*, 1920; cp. Douady, *Prosodie Anglaise*, ch. III, 1928) m'ont fait limiter à quelques spécimens, en note (ex. p. 5, n. 8; p. 31, n. 6; p. 151, n. 7; p. 194, n. 9; p. 203, n. 9; p. 245, n. 6; p. 252, n. 5), sauf exceptions courantes (ex. *e'en, o'er*) ou cas *spécial* (p. 220, n. 1), d'autres simplifications métriques, réelles ou apparentes, nombreuses dans les textes originaux, et dont certaines reparaissent, assez capricieusement, dans telle ou telle édition moderne. Une diction *expressivement* rythmée sera, il me semble, d'une aide plus sûre dans les difficultés de scansion. — Pour les abréviations *en prose*, voir p. XXI n. 8.

réponses suffisamment *nuancées*[1] aux questions maîtresses? Si, par exemple, le sens général dans lequel a été refondu le vieux drame est évident, le *degré d'unité* de notre pièce et de ses personnages (de celui surtout qui domine tous les autres, et donne à l'œuvre son atmosphère propre) l'est, même pour des yeux qui ne seraient pas français, beaucoup moins. Procédant, selon *toute* apparence, par reprises diverses, de verve en tout cas et sans s'arrêter à menuiser raccords[2] et explications dont son public n'aurait cure, ni s'interdire les digressions (même d'intérêt éphémère, voire professionnel et d'affaires)[3], Shakespeare ne s'est pas davantage inquiété de contradictions auxquelles, sous l'empire de la scène ou de la tirade, les spectateurs ne prendraient point garde. C'est ainsi que (si l'on n'a recours à des explications que rien, dans le texte, ne suggère) le Hamlet du plus fameux des monologues, pour qui nul ne revient de par-delà la mort, n'est pas celui de toute l'intrigue[4]. Mais n'en est-il pas plus profondément Hamlet[5]?

Ma dette est immense, on le devine, envers les éditions de W. G. Clark et A. Wright (Clarendon Press, 1871), de Furness (*Variorum*, 2 vol. in-quarto, Philadelphia, 1878), de Dowden (1re éd., 1899; 5e, 1919) et de Verity (Cambridge University Press, 1904); le *Shakespeare Lexicon* d'A. Schmidt

1. Sur la *Réaction contre la Critique Romantique de Sh.*, par ex., l'érudite et droite vigueur (ex. p. 224, n. 3; Ap. *I*), l'étroitesse quelquefois aussi (p. 155, n. 4; p. 175, n. 3; Ap. *B*), avec lesquelles elle s'attache à discerner en Sh. un Anglais de son temps et dans ses pièces les traditions et multiples conventions du théâtre de son Londres, M. E. Legouis a donné aux *Essays and Studies of the English Association* (1928) des pages de la plus délicate et pénétrante sagesse.

2. Cp. *par ex.* p. 102, n. 11.

3. II, II, 327-59. — Aux yeux de Johnson, la « variété » était le mérite distinctif de la pièce. Cp. A. Walkley, p. 86 n. 2, p. 144 n. 9.

4. Cp. p. 109 n. 8. — Sur ce que l'intrigue même a d'invraisemblable, cp. en particulier Ap. *D*; sur les obscurités psychologiques, par ex. p. 224 n. 3.

5. N'est-ce pas à cette unité profonde, unité de tempérament, non moins distincte de l'*intelligibilité* psychologique que de l'unité *historique* (extérieure, donc, relativement), qu'est due l' « individualité » de style, de ton, de voix, de tant de personnages shakespeariens? Pope, par une exagération (cp. par ex. p. 141 n. 10, p. 153 n. 10) qui n'importait, la proclamait chez tous (Préface de son édition des *Œuvres Dramatiques*). Le plus accompli représentant de l'école critique à laquelle surtout la note 2 fait allusion, E. E. Stoll, n'a cessé de la reconnaître (*Sh. Studies, Historical and Comparative in Method*, 1927).

(Kœnigsberg, 1875), le *Shakespeare Glossary* de C. T. Onions; l'*English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford); la *Shakespearian Grammar* d'E. A. Abbott (3e éd. 1870), que j'ai comparée, plus d'une fois, avec la *Shakespeare Grammatik* de W. Franz (3e éd. Heidelberg, 1924); et nombre d'historiens littéraires et de critiques, de ces vingt dernières années surtout et de tendances diverses. Ne pouvant reconnaître, au fur et à mesure, toutes ces obligations, j'ai limité les références à deux sortes de cas : les uns, la majorité de beaucoup, où une interprétation ou un fait m'ont semblé particulièrement précieux; une poignée d'autres, où l'interprétation donnée me laissait incertain mais s'autorisait d'un nom considérable à juste titre.

M. Derocquigny, professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Lille, m'avait aimablement permis des citations de sa verveuse et savante traduction (prose pour prose, et vers, rimés pour rimés, blancs pour blancs; Collection Koszul, Les Belles Lettres); les dimensions de ce petit livre m'ont contraint de les réduire à fort peu. De précieuses indications de M. Feuillerat, professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Rennes, m'ont guidé parmi la bibliographie de l'insoluble et inévitable problème du premier in-quarto. M. E. Delavenay, élève de l'École Normale Supérieure, lecteur à Caius and Gonville College (Cambridge), et M. Jean Rey ont bien voulu faire pour moi, en Angleterre, certaines recherches. A MM. W. M. Daniels, M. A. London, docteur de l'Université de Paris; E. Legouis, professeur à la Sorbonne; G. d'Hangest, professeur au Lycée Condorcet; Léon de Zoubaloff; Joseph Aynard[1], je dois de posséder, ou d'avoir pu consulter à loisir, des ouvrages ou articles qui, sans eux, me seraient demeurés malaisément, ou point, accessibles.

Que tous veuillent bien trouver ici l'expression de ma très vive gratitude.

R. T.

Janvier 1929.

1. Auteur, dans le journal des *Débats*, d'un très substantiel article sur *Hamlet et les commentateurs* (10 février 1925).

INTRODUCTION HISTORIQUE

I

Amleth et Hamblet.

Pour comprendre *Hamlet*, prononçait Victor Hugo, au cours de sa Préface[1] à la vaillante traduction des *Œuvres Complètes de Shakespeare* que son fils François-Victor venait d'achever, « avoir lu Belleforest ne suffit pas;... il faut lire Saxo Grammaticus[2]. » Du moins est-ce sous la plume savante, un peu difficile[3] et barbare, mais puissante, de ce premier historien de sa patrie[4] que prend, d'abord, pour nous forme littéraire le récit dont cette plus fameuse, peut-être, des tragédies de Shakespeare présente encore beaucoup de traits[5] et quelque chose de l'atmosphère.

Ouvrons donc, vers la fin du Livre III, l'*Historia Danica*[6].

1. Datée de Hauteville House, avril 1865.

2. Sect. VI. Le conseil vaut mieux que la raison précise : « cet inspiré (Sh.) était un étudiant... Faites donc ses études si vous voulez le connaître... » Rien ne prouve que Sh. ait lui-même lu Belleforest; moins encore, selon toutes probabilités, Saxo.

3. On ne le sentira que trop dans l'analyse qui suit.

4. Saxo le Lettré était né, vers le milieu du XII[e] s., à Helsingör (forme française, Elseneur), l'Elsinore des textes modernes de Sh. (*Elsonoure* dans Q[2]; épelé dans F. *Elsonower*). En ce temps, une plaine du Jutland passait encore pour le lieu de sépulture d'Amleth (*insignis ejus sepultura ac nomine*).

5. Dont quelques-uns seulement ont pu trouver place dans les notes qui suivent.

6. On trouvera ce qui en importe ici, sous la première forme qui nous en soit parvenue (texte imprimé de 1514); la vigoureuse traduction du Prof. Elton; la version de Belleforest (éd. 1582, celle des éditions au British Museum dont se rapproche le plus *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, donnée en regard), et un savant essai sur les origines, les

Nous y lirons comment Horwendille[1], gouverneur, avec son frère Fengon, du Jutland, s'était acquis, par la piraterie, une gloire dont Collère, roi de Norvège, résolut d'éclipser, par les armes, l'éclat: comment, s'étant rencontrés seuls, au cœur verdoyant d'une île, les deux chefs convinrent de vider sur-le-champ leur querelle par un combat singulier[2], où Collère trouva la mort[3]; comment, enfin, après trois années de fructueux exploits, Horwendille fit, du meilleur de son butin, présent à son souverain, le roi de Danemark Rorique, lequel lui accorda pour femme sa fille Geruthe; union dont naquit Amleth.

Mais une si haute et heureuse fortune avait allumé dans l'âme de Fengon une jalousie que seul put assouvir le meurtre de son frère. Il prétexta avoir dû protéger contre les violences de Horwendille la tant douce Geruthe, et l'épousa, ajoutant ainsi (car un crime en entraîne, rapidement, un autre) au fratricide l'inceste[4].

Ce que voyant, Amleth, afin que son oncle crût sans danger de le laisser vivre, feignit l'imbécilité. Il passait jour après jour dans la maison de sa mère, comme en une torpeur abjecte, se souillant des saletés du sol et ne tenant de propos qu'en accord avec la perte d'esprit dont tout le reste témoignait. Seulement, de temps à autre, assis près de l'âtre, il en retirait avec ses mains des piécettes de bois, les aiguisait, les durcissait au feu, et y fixait des crocs, pour en mieux assurer la prise. Lorsqu'on lui demandait à quoi il s'occupait là, il répondait qu'il préparait des traits acérés pour venger son père; et la plupart d'en rire.

D'autres, toutefois, d'esprit plus pénétrant[5], jugeaient que

analogues, et les prolongements de la légende, dans *The Sources of Hamlet* de Sir Israel Gollancz. Oxford, 1926.

1. Saxo, naturellement, latinise tous ces noms. L'on a cru pouvoir leur conserver, ici, la forme que leur donna Belleforest.

2. Le contraste entre cette résolution meurtrière et le charme printanier du lieu (« *vernantis loci iocunditas*, » « the sweetness of that spring-green spot, » Elton) n'échappe pas à Saxo. Belleforest, qui, d'ailleurs, ici, abrège, semble n'avoir cure de ces choses.

3. Cp. I, 1, 80-86.

4. P. 26 n. 6. — Belleforest le fera plus scélérat encore : « avant que mettre la main sanguinolente et parricide sur son frère, il avoit incestueusement souillé la couche fraternelle. » Cp. I, v, 42 n.

5. « *Altioris ingenii*; » « accors et qui avoyent le nez long » (Belleforest); « such as had a deeper *reach* » (*Hystorie*), cp. II, 1, 63.

cette fabrication et le soin avec lequel il veillait sur ses piécettes n'étaient pas d'un stupide. Ils conseillèrent donc l'épreuve suivante : on lui ferait, en un lieu solitaire, rencontrer une beauté; s'il ne cédait pas à la tentation, il avait en vérité perdu l'esprit. Ainsi fut fait[1]; mais Amleth, à temps averti du péril par l'ingéniosité d'un frère de lait[2], redoubla les ruses[3], s'assura que la jeune fille, élevée, elle aussi, avec lui, et qui l'aimait[4], nierait, et, lui-même, sut donner le change par des réponses vraies, comme toujours, mais ne pouvant sembler qu'absurdes.

Quelqu'un, pourtant, plus riche de présomption que d'adresse[5], s'offrit pour forcer, enfin, le secret de cette prétendue folie. Pendant une absence calculée de Fengon, il se glissa sous la paille[6] dans la chambre de Geruthe, comptant surprendre une conversation que mère et fils allaient avoir à cœur ouvert. Mais Amleth, toujours en garde contre les pièges, entra en chantant comme un coq, battant des bras en guise d'ailes, et, sautant sur la paille de çà de là, ne tarda pas à sentir sous ses pieds un corps. Aussitôt d'y plonger l'épée; après quoi, il retira l'homme, l'acheva, puis le dépeça, fit bouillir le tout, et le précipita dans un cloaque, parmi les immondices duquel les porcs le dévorèrent. Retournant alors à Geruthe, il lui fit, de son union avec Fengon, honte si grande[7] que, le cœur déchiré[8],

1. Il n'avait, sur le chemin, pas manqué de jouer le fol, chevauchant face à la queue, dont il s'était servi comme de rêne. — Belleforest supprima ceci (cp. p. VIII n. 4), non moins que les répliques (énigmes de forme imagée, très germanique et scandinave), grotesques en apparence uniquement, qu'il fait aux propos, intentionnellement ridicules, de ceux qui l'accompagnent.

2. Ce qui a pu, à l'auteur de la pièce qu'a refondue Shakespeare, suggérer Horatio.

3. Afin de pouvoir ensuite éviter le mensonge (« *vitandi mendacii gratia* »), en jouant d'ailleurs, semble-t-il bien, sur les mots: ce qui est ingéniosité admirable. Cp. notre Hamlet.

4. Par où elle a pu suggérer Ophélie.

5. « *Præsumptione quam solertia abundantior.* » Belleforest, s'il le pense, ne le dit point.

6. C'est ainsi qu'Elton rend « *stramentum.* » Le mot, ou la chose, gêna, peut-être, Belleforest, qui dit « *quelque loudier* » (c'est-à-dire couvre-pied, courte-pointe, de lit).

7. La proportion entre ce discours chez Saxo et la « harangue » composée par Belleforest est de un à quatre; comme, ou presque, pour l'ensemble du récit.

8. « *Lacerata*; » ce qui annonce presque (sans avoir, le moins du monde, nécessairement suggéré) III, IV, 156.

elle revint à la vertu, « mettant les feux du passé au-dessus des séductions du présent. »

A la disparition de l'espion, le tyran, d'autre part, avait compris le danger mortel. pour lui-même, d'épargner plus longtemps la vie de son neveu. Mais agir à découvert eût été offenser Geruthe et Rorique; il s'avisa donc de dépêcher Amleth au roi de Bretagne[1]. Deux courtisans à sa discrétion accompagnaient le jeune homme, porteurs de lettres[2] qui enjoignaient au Breton de le mettre à mort. C'était compter sans l'astuce admirable d'Amleth. Pendant que reposaient les satellites de son oncle, il fouilla dans leurs coffres, lut les lettres, et à leur contenu, qu'il effaça, substitua l'ordre, signé comme de Fengon, d'occire les deux hommes, tandis qu'à lui-même, dont il vantait la sagesse, serait donnée en mariage la fille du souverain. La pénétration plus qu'humaine et, pour dire vrai, la faculté de divination[3] dont, aussitôt arrivé à la cour, il fit preuve, ravirent, d'ailleurs, le roi, qui se hâta d'accorder l'union; et, le lendemain, les deux compagnons furent pendus.

Cette exécution est, à la mort de Fengon près, le dernier point de contact avec la pièce. Amleth, lorsqu'il avait quitté sa mère, l'avait en secret instruite de faire, le jour anniversaire de ce départ, célébrer ses funérailles. Ce jour-là donc, à son propre banquet funèbre, dans la grand salle, tendue d'une tapisserie de la main même de Geruthe, il reparut, et, jouant le fol comme par le passé, fit boire les convives si bien qu'ils demeurèrent là, cuvant sur le sol leur crapuleuse ivresse[4]. Détachant, alors, la tapisserie et la fixant sur eux avec les piécettes à crocs de longtemps

1. L'Angleterre moderne.

2. Gravées sur bois; mode d'écriture jadis commun, note Saxo.

3. Averti qu'il était, en réalité, des secrets, *non de l'avenir certes*, mais du passé, par le Malin, expliquera Belleforest; « veu qu'en ce temps-là tous ces pays septentrionaux estanz souz l'obéissance de Sathan, il y avoit une infinité d'enchanteurs : et n'estoit fils de bonne mère, qui n'en sçavoit assez pour sa provision. » Suivent deux pages sur la réalité *et les limites* de la magie.

4. « *Passim fusis humi corporibus, permixtam somno crapulam ructabantur.* » Ce qui, diligemment traité selon recettes éprouvées, devient, chez Belleforest : « corps assoupis de vin, gisans à terre comme pourceaux (cp. p. 42 n. 12), les uns dormans, les autres vomissans le trop de vin que par trop gouluement ils avoyent avallé (cp. *ibid.* n. 2) ».

préparées par lui, il mit le feu à la salle, où tous brûlèrent. Quant à Fengon, qui s'était déjà retiré, il l'alla surprendre dans son sommeil, s'assura de son épée, l'éveilla, et, proclamant sa personne et sa cause, l'abattit. « Homme vaillant et digne d'un éternel renom.... Ayant par son habileté sauvé sa vie, par sa valeur vengé son père, on ne sait si on le doit estimer plus vaillant ou plus sage. »

L'éloge clôt le Livre III. Le suivant nous dit l'élection d'Amleth à la place de Fengon; son retour en Bretagne; l'amour que conçut pour lui la vierge farouche qui régnait sur l'Écosse; leur mariage (bien que sa première femme vécût et l'aimât toujours); comment il triompha des embûches et des armes du roi des Bretons; son retour, avec ses deux épouses, dans son pays; et comment il y périt, dans une bataille contre un oncle (maternel celui-ci) auquel sa veuve écossaise, après avoir juré de mourir avec lui, s'unit[1] aussitôt.

Tel est le barbare récit que, trois siècles et demi plus tard, François de Belle-forest, Commingeois, » « aymé de la noblesse,... caressé des gens de sçavoir, honoré du peuple[2], » engrisailla[3] d'écriture filandreuse, rendit de ci de là moins primitif[4], doctement dilua, à son parfait contentement, de vingt manières, pour faire de si « grandes et gaillardes occurrences » une[5] de ses édifiantes *Histoires Tragiques*.

1. Sur quoi, Saxo, avant un dernier et splendide éloge d'Amleth (sans la rigueur de la fortune, il eût, pour l'éclat de sa gloire, « *fulgore* », égalé les dieux, surpassé, par ses vertus, les exploits d'Hercule; cp. p. 26 n. 2) redouble les figures et images d'une rhétorique non sans vigueur, sur le thème qui demeure à la source de notre drame : « *Frailly, thy name is woman* » (I. II, 146); cp. e. g. p. 113 n. 6. Belleforest (après avoir fait l'Ecossaise plus coupable encore) paraphrase, selon son habitude, à loisir, puis s'excuse, sur son auteur et son émotion propre, de « s'égarer » ainsi, « vomissant choses indignes de ce sexe. »

2. C'est lui qui, avant que d'entamer le récit, nous en informe.

3. Non qu'il soit dépourvu de toute verve; mais ce qu'il en a (ex. p. V n. 5) est le plus souvent en pantoufles.

4. Par exemple, l'Amleth de Saxo expliquait au roi de Bretagne avoir deviné l'origine servile de la reine à trois signes : elle s'enveloppait la tête comme font les esclaves, retroussait sa robe pour marcher, et, après s'être curé les dents, mâchait et avalait les débris de nourriture ainsi extraits. Il « luy specifia quelques sottes contenances d'icelle, » dit Belleforest (cp. p. VI, n. 1, 6).

5. La troisième du tome V, dont la Bibliothèque Nationale et le British Museum ont, à eux deux, sept éditions, de 1572 à 1603-1604 seulement.

« Il se trouve, » déclarait-il, « peu d'hommes qui desdaignent de lire mes œuvres; » ce fut grâce, apparemment[1], à lui que le héros de Saxo fut connu en Angleterre; et c'est de sa prose qu'est traduite, avec une docilité qui eût pu trouver meilleur emploi, une *Hystorie of Hamblet*[2], imprimée en 1608[3] à Londres; publication suggérée, peut-être, par le succès du sujet à la scène. A part quelques méprises sur le sens, quelques inadvertances de syntaxe, et naturellement des détails d'expression[4], elle ne s'écarte de l'original que pour adopter, en deux points, la version de notre pièce. C'est derrière la tapisserie, « *the arras,* » que, dans la chambre de la reine, le conseiller espion se dissimule; et, lorsque Hamblet sent quelque chose bouger là, il crie « *A rat, a rat!* »

II

Hamlet.

La première apparition du « Prince de Danemark » sur une scène de Londres datait alors d'une vingtaine d'années. En 1589 apparemment, Nashe écrivait[5], de très haut :

1. Rien d'invraisemblable à ce que les *Histoires Tragiques* n'aient pas été ignorées, par exemple, de Kyd (cp. p. X), dont un personnage (*Span. Trag.*, IV, I, 166-167) loue *de visu* certains acteurs de Paris et qui devait, en 1594, publier une version de la *Cornélie* de Garnier.

2. Sir I. Gollancz compare le latin tardif « *Amblethus* » et, en anglais, à cette époque, par exemple, le nom de lieu « *Tower Hamblets* » pour « Hamlets » (1648). Cette déformation, constante au début du récit, de plus en plus rare bientôt, se rencontre encore à quelques pages de la fin. Au total, pourtant, « *Hamlet* » domine.

3. Un seul exemplaire a survécu; et l'on a pu supposer quelque édition antérieure, qui aurait, elle, disparu totalement. La forme « *Hamlet* » en serait la trace unique; Sir I. Gollancz est de ceux qui ne le pensent pas.

4. Ça et là, par exemple, quelque trait de vivacité familière disparaît, cp. p. v n. 5.

5. Préface qui présente, « to the Gentlemen of both Universities, » *Menaphon*, roman de cet autre maître-ès-arts de Cambridge, Greene. L'autorisation de publier est d'août. Près de deux ans s'étaient donc écoulés depuis que le retour de la troupe qui avait joué à la cour d'Elseneur (cp. p. 2 n. 9) avait pu aviver l'intérêt du récit pour lequel F. de Belleforest était « allé visiter l'histoire Danoise. » — Pour les auteurs et les écrits que j'aurai l'occasion de mentionner ainsi, (particulièrement pour la *Tragédie*

« A lire Sénèque en anglais[1], à la chandelle, on recueille maintes bonnes sentences, telles que ' *blood is a beggar*[2] ' et autres; et si vous le traitez de la belle façon, par un matin de gel, il vous fournira des *Hamlets* entiers, je devrais dire des poignées de tirades[3] tragiques. » L'occasion de ce trait, et d'autres[4] avec lui, était une longue décharge de verve bilieuse sur certains[5] écrivailleurs, dénoncés pour être non moins ignorants que faméliques, et qui, nés pour le métier de notaire[6], avaient ainsi d'abord saigné Sénèque à mort, puis, bondissant, tel le chevreau d'Ésope[7], à une occupation plus désespérée encore, se mêlaient à présent de traductions de l'italien (comment! leurs brochures à quatre sous permettaient d'en juger). On admet, par suite, généralement que le *Hamlet* ainsi tourné en dérision était de Kyd, fils de « scrivener », non dépourvu certes de lettres et fort éloigné de le dissimuler[8], auteur déjà du plus fameux drame de vengeance de l'époque, la *Tragédie Espagnole*[9], mais n'ayant vraisemblablement passé par l'une ni l'autre des Universités, et qui venait de publier, en un mince in-

Espagnole, dont il faut connaître au moins les grandes lignes), est-il besoin de renvoyer aux pages, si pleines et nuancées, d'E. Legouis (*Hist. Lit. Anglaise* par E. Legouis et L. Cazamian, Hachette, 1924)?

1. En 1581, les versions anglaises des dix tragédies qu'on lui attribuait alors avaient été réunies en un volume.

2. La nature précise du lien entre ceci et ce qui suit n'est pas nette; cp. peut-être, pourtant, à la « sentence » citée p. 56 n. 5.

3. « *Speeches* »; ce qui n'exclurait pas la stichomythie, la sententieuse escrime, vers contre vers, où Sénèque excelle.

4. Qui, plus ou moins nettement, visent Kyd; v. F. S. Boas, *Works of Kyd* 1901.

5. Pluriel oratoire, sans doute, en harmonie avec le grossissement caractéristique de tout le passage.

6. " The trade of *Noverint*, " premier mot de la formule, en latin, (*s Noverint universi per praesentes* » = Que tous, par les presentes, sachent) par où débutaient certains documents que rédigeaient les « scriveners. »

7. Dans la version qu'en avait donnée Spenser (*Shepherds Calendar, May*), le chevreau (*kid*), tout ravi déjà des babioles exhibées par le renard, déguisé en dolent colporteur, est tenté encore par un grelot, laissé au fond du panier, où il se laisse pousser, enfermer, et prestement emporter.

8. Plus d'un personnage de la *Tragédie Espagnole*, et jusqu'à l'héroïne, « fair Bel-imperia, » ne s'exprime-t-il pas, à l'occasion, en vers latins, centons ou échos de Sénèque, de Virgile, ou d'autres? — Et si l'Elysée y était « fourré en enfer, » Nashe lui-même ne pouvait se gausser là que d'une docilité entière au sixième livre de l'*Enéide*.

9. *The Spanish Tragedie*, jouée pour la première fois vers 1586 sans doute.

quarto, une version assez fautive d'un opuscule du Tasse[1].

C'est, en tout cas, la même pièce[2], sans doute, aux retouches toujours possibles près, qui, cinq ans plus tard, figure (pauvrement[3] et une fois sans plus) dans les comptes du directeur et propriétaire de théâtres, Henslowe. C'est, vraisemblablement, à la même encore que Lodge, à son tour, fait allusion, en 1596, lorsque, décrivant un des « démons incarnés de ce siècle[4], » il lui prête face aussi pâle que celle du Fantôme qui, « au théâtre[5] », criait, d'une voix d'écaillère, si misérablement : « Hamlet, vengeance[6]! » Un spectre sur la scène[7] n'était, d'ailleurs, pas moins dans la manière de Sénèque[8] (et, précisément, de Kyd[9]) que de sentencieuses

1. *The Housholders Philosophie*, 1588 (*Il Padre di Famiglia*); en français du temps, la Philosophie du Mesnager.

2. Que ce ne fût pas, du moins alors, une pièce nouvelle, est confirmé par l'absence d'indication contraire dans le registre de Henslowe.

3. Le théâtre était, d'ailleurs, cette fois, celui de Newington Butts, assez écarté et déjà fort délaissé, loué peut-être par Henslowe, à cause de quelques réparations à celui de la Rose, pour les dix jours où y jouèrent ensemble deux troupes, celle du " Lord Admiral " et celle du " Lord Chamberlain ", dont Sh. faisait probablement partie déjà, et qui aurait acheté la pièce des " Lord Pembroke's men, " à leur récente dissolution (J. Q. Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses* et *Life of Sh.*).

4. *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse, discovering the Devils Incarnate of this Age.*

5. On pense qu'il s'agit du « Théâtre », le premier construit en Angleterre, par Burbage père.

6. On trouve encore une allusion bouffonne à ce " *Hamlet, revenge!* " dans le *Night Raven* de S. Rowlands, description de scènes et types nocturnes de Londres (1620). — En 1608, un acteur de la troupe de Sh., Arnim (*Nest of Ninnies*), avait, d'autre part, cité, comme employée par Hamlet, l'ironie menaçante : " *things called whips*, " que l'on rencontre aussi dans la *Seconde Partie d'Henri VI*, II, I, 136, et dont fait usage également l'auteur d'additions (cp. p. XIII) à la *Tragédie Espagnole*, III, XI, 43 éd. Boas.

7. Rien dans le récit de Saxo ne motivant ou suggérant pareille apparition, le docte Belleforest avait seulement fait dire à son héros, comme volait sur le sol la tête de Fengon : « va et, estant aux enfers, ne faux de compter à ton frère ...que c'est son fils qui te faict faire ce message, à fin que... son ombre s'appaise parmy les esprits bien-heureux, et me quitte de celle obligation qui m'astraignoit à poursuivre ceste vengeance.... »

8. Ombres de Tantale, amené par Mégère, au début de *Thyeste*; de Thyeste, à son tour, au début d'*Agamemnon*; d'Agrippine, dans *Octavie*, que l'on attribuait alors au même auteur.

9. Dans la *Trag. Esp.*, ombre d'Andrea qui, avec la Vengeance pour interlocutrice, ouvre la pièce, assiste à chaque acte derrière la scène, et reparaît pour le commenter et le clore.

tirades tragiques. Peut-être l'auteur avait-il même poussé le classicisme jusqu'à faire précéder le tout d'un prologue mythologique, tel que ce dialogue entre les trois Furies et la Nuit[1] qui, en étrange disparate, précède une bouffonne déformation allemande d'un ou plusieurs *Hamlets* anglais, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dännemark*[2]. Ce que paraissent, du moins permettre d'affirmer les analogies entre la *Tragédie Espagnole* d'une part et le *Hamlet* shakespearien de l'autre, c'est que, dans le *Hamlet* pré-shakespearien, il était fait également usage d'une représentation au cours de la pièce; qu'il y avait de la folie[3], aussi, et, tout au moins, menace de conflits armés entre royaumes[4], d'où va-et-vient d'ambassadeurs. Il est, d'autre part, vraisemblable que les obstacles à la vengeance y étaient surtout, ou même uniquement, comme dans le cas de Hieronimo[5], extérieurs[6].

De la pièce pré-shakespearienne, nul indice que l'impression ait jamais été projetée. Par contre, lorsque, le 26 juillet 1602, est inscrit au Registre de la Compagnie des Librairies (« *Stationers* ») le droit exclusif, pour un certain James Roberts, de publier « *a Booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince* (of) *Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes,* » c'est, à tout le moins, d'une forme de notre *Hamlet* qu'il doit s'agir. La troupe en question (que son fameux « clown, » Kemp, venait, temporairement, d'abandonner[7]) était effectivement celle de Shakespeare; et entre elle et les Enfants de la Chapelle Royale[8] n'était pas terminée cette guerre à laquelle s'intéresse si vivement son Prince de Danemark[9]. En sep-

1. L'Amour, la Fortune, et la Mort ouvrent et commentent, tel un chœur antique (cp. p. XI n. 9), *Soliman and Perseda* (1592?), tragédie soit de Kyd, soit d'un imitateur (Boas).

2. De ce *Fratricide Puni ou Hamlet Prince de Danemark* (traduit dans Furness) l'unique version est de 1710; mais la source première en est, sans doute, les tournées faites, dès la fin du XVI^e^ s., par des acteurs anglais, en Allemagne comme au Danemark (cp. 2 n. 9).

3. Au 3^e^ acte de la *Trag. Esp.*, avant toute addition (p. XXIII), une scène (VIII) nous montre la mère de la victime perdant temporairement la raison, et bientôt (XIII) c'est le père, « *old Hieronimō,* » lui-même qui a une explosion de folie.

4. Espagne et Portugal dans la *Tragédie.*

5. *Span. Trag.* III, XIII, 36-38.

6. Cp. pp. 168 (n. 3), 172 (n. 8), 174 (n. 9), et Ap. *J.* — Sur d'autres différences avec notre Hamlet v. pp. XV-XVII.

7. Cp. p. 119 n. 2.

8. II, II, pp. 87-8.

9. En 1598, d'autre part, dans

tembre 1601 et à la fin de juin 1602, un directeur de théâtre rival, Henslowe, faisait, d'ailleurs, faire à la *Tragédie* de Kyd des additions ; et entre celles-ci et la refonte par Shakespeare du *Hamlet*, propriété de sa troupe, il y a, presque sûrement, quelque rapport de cause à effet.

Deux ou trois années plus tôt, *Jules César*[1], tragédie du théoricien politique, ne retenait l'attention sur aucun personnage vraiment noir. *Hamlet*, qui (vers le début surtout) en reste, par moments, proche encore par le tour d'imagination, le style, et la qualité prosodique[2], devait être, au contraire (avec une vertu peut-être unique de pénétration intime) la première des pièces les plus sombres, comme les plus puissantes, de son auteur. De 1603[3] paraît être *Troïlus et Cressida*, qu'un cynisme aigu sillonne profondément. En 1604, date de l'écrasant *Othello*. *Mesure pour Mesure* ne méritera le nom de *comédie* que par la substitution soudaine, à mi-chemin, de marionnettes à des personnages vivants. Puis ce sont, une même année, semblerait-il, (1606) l'affolant *Macbeth* et *Lear*, presque surhumain. A l'assombrissement de l'œuvre (lequel, d'ailleurs, est loin, à cette date, de l'isoler[4]) y avait-il des causes personnelles? En ce qui regarde particulièrement *Hamlet*, l'année 1601, celle de l'exécution d'Essex et de l'emprisonnement de Southampton[5], avait été celle aussi où, à l'appel de « *this*

un éloge en règle de Sh., à la fois Ovide, Plaute, et Sénèque anglais, le docte Meres (*Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury*), qui lui faisait du barbare *Titus Andronicus* un titre de gloire, n'avait pas mentionné de *Hamlet*. Antérieure, par contre, à février 1601 semble une note manuscrite du doctissime Gabriel Harvey, où il est dit que « the younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeares Venus and Adonis; but his Lucrece and his tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, have it in them to please the wiser sort. »

1. Qu'un voyageur allemand vit jouer au Globe, égayé d'une danse finale, (cp. p. 97 n. 6), en septembre 1599. Deux allusions de Jonson paraissent de la même année (J. Q. Adams).

2. Cp., entre autres passages en vers *J. C.*, III, 15-32 et *Ham.* I, I, 113-125; *J. C.* II, I, 21-27 et *Ham.* I, III; et combien plus proche du *Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté* par ex., ainsi que le fait remarquer A. C. Bradley (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, lect. III) est *Ham*, I, I, 157-167, que *Macbeth*, I, II, 1-9!

3. Date, du moins, de la permission d'imprimer, antérieure à la publication de six ans. — La chronologie des pièces de ce temps est, on le voit (à part même les retouches d'usage), affaire, plus ou moins, toujours de conjecture.

4. Voir Legouis, p. 412.

5. Le somptueux patron à qui avait été, huit ans auparavant, dédié *Vénus et Adonis*.

fell sergeant, Death[1], » John Shakespeare, le « *merry-cheek-ed*[2], » s'était tu pour toujours. De ce dégoût de vivre, d'autre part, qui, si tôt[3], monte, du plus profond du cœur, aux lèvres du Prince de Danemark, que pouvait éprouver, autrement qu'en imagination, l'acteur-auteur-actionnaire, prospère de plus en plus, William Shakespeare « *of Stratford-on-Avon, gentleman,* » aux fières armoiries (obtenues, disait la devise, « *non sanz droict* »), avec trois maisons, dont l'une de dix âtres, dans sa ville natale, et une « *possession of dirt*[4] » qu'il arrondissait et faisait attentivement rapporter? La question est aussi insoluble qu'humaine. « Shakespeare est le seul biographe de Shakespeare, » disait épigrammatiquement Emerson[5], au temps de la première Société d'érudites recherches[6]; ce qui de lui surtout importe est dans son œuvre. Revenons à elle.

En 1603 parut « The Tragicall Historie of HAMLET, *Prince of Denmarke.* By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse[7] seruants in the Cittie[8] of London : as also[9] in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere. At London printed for N: L. and John Trundell [10]. » Ce premier in-quarto soulève, malheureusement, des problèmes dont la solution,

1. V., I, 336.

2. " A merry-cheekt old man; " ainsi semble l'avoir décrit quelqu'un qui l'aurait vu dans sa boutique encore (J. Q. Adams, p. 34).

3. I, II, 129.

4. V, II, 90.

5. *Representative Men*, 1850.

6. The Shakespeare Society, 1840-53.

7. = " His Majesty's. " Les lettres patentes qui permettaient à la troupe de Sh. de prendre désormais ce titre étaient du 19 mai.

8. Plus précisément, hors des portes de la Cité même — et de la juridiction du Lord Maire, hostile aux théâtres. Quant aux deux Universités, qui vont faire doctes pendants, comme, à Oxford en tout cas, il n'était, alors, pas rare que les autorités universitaires payassent des troupes pour *ne pas* jouer et repartir sans tapage (« *sine strepitu* »), il s'agit vraisemblablemens de représentations sous l'égide des municipalités et destinées, en principe, aux seules gens de la ville (F. S. Boas, *Sh. and the Universities*).

9. D'après W. J. Lawrence (*Sh's Workshop*, 1928), par une *autre* troupe (normalement ambulante, celle-ci — et, par suite, ne s'embarrassant, par exemple, pas de canon; d'où absence de rien qui, dans cet in- quarto, corresponde à V, II, 275-6 et 399-400); cf. *Ado*, *M* § 3 1. 3. Le directeur Burbage, plus tard, vendu aux libraires cette version composite et dégradée.

10. Quant à Roberts, on a supposé (A. W. Pollard, *Sh.'s Fight with the Pirates*, 1917) que, l'année précédente, les acteurs s'étaient, comme en d'autres occasions, servis de lui seulement pour retarder (cp. p. XV n. 4) toute publication.

qui importerait, demeure, au mieux, douteuse. Non annoncé au Registre des Libraires et taché, balafré, défiguré de négligences, bévues, bourdons, « coquilles » de toute taille, bien plus nombreuses encore que celles des textes évidemment autorisés[1] (lesquels feraient, aujourd'hui, scandale), il est généralement tenu pour d'origine frauduleuse. Certains spécialistes de la question[2], toutefois, non seulement assaillent d'arguments précis l'hypothèse de notes furtivement prises aux représentations au moyen de la rudimentaire sténographie d'alors, mais se refusent à reconnaître[3] la trace de quelque « hireling[4] » infidèle, livrant tout ce qu'il se rappelait (et bien plus encore) de ses rôles et d'autres. N. L. (Nicholas Ling) n'aurait pas été, pour cette première publication, moins en règle qu'il ne le sera pour la suivante[5].

Non moins déconcertante, à vrai dire, en serait la composition de ce texte, imprévisible bigarrure de passages qui reparaîtront, littéralement ou presque (bien que pas toujours en même place[6]), dans notre *Hamlet*; d'autres qui ont un air de pauvres résumés, avec épaves de l'original à la dérive et minces raccords, de style usé; d'autres, enfin, qui nettement diffèrent, non seulement de forme mais, plusieurs, de substance. Serait-ce une version écourtée, pour quelque tournée en province par exemple, d'une pièce déjà en partie (le premier tiers surtout), refondue par Shakespeare[7]? De l'ancienne pièce apparemment demeurent quelques

1. Auxquels on le préfère, toutefois, généralement en une demi-douzaine de points (ex., p. 29, n. 6; p. 131 n. 7).

2. F. G. Hubbard, qui a donné de cet in-quarto une édition critique, avec introduction et notes (Madisson, 1920), et H. de Groot (*Hamlet; its textual history*, Amsterdam, 1923).

3. Comme fait M. J. Dover Wilson, par ex. (*The Copy for Hamlet*, 1603, *and the Hamlet transcript*, 1593. London, 1918).

4. Acteur dont les gages (à peu près équivalents à un salaire d'ouvrier d'alors, Jusserand, *Hist. Litt. du Peuple Anglais*, II, p. 524), étant fixes, lui rendaient relativement indifférent que la publication du texte diminuât l'affluence aux représentations. Chargé, souvent, de plusieurs petits rôles, il entendait alors, et pouvait retenir, pas mal d'une même pièce.

5. Trundell, lui, semble avoir été en mauvais termes avec les acteurs.

6. Ainsi rien dans les paroles du Fantôme à Hamlet de parallèle à I, v, 48-50; mais Hamlet le dira de lui, moins heureusement (" *whose heart went hand in hand...* "), au cours de la tirade qui correspond à III, iv, 53, etc.

7. Ou (p. xiv n. 9) une macédoine de pré-shakespearien et de shakespearien, cuisinée pour troupe (aussi bien que public) de province?

noms[1], ou formes de noms; un ordre plus raide[2] que celui qui nous est familier; une intrigue un peu moins complexe[3]; quelques passages[4] (et toute une scène[5]) sans équivalents dans les textes qui suivront; généralement, une maigreur et une banalité[6] relatives de pensée, en même temps que l'unité, quelque peu sommaire[7], d'intérêt, et la netteté, simpliste, de la psychologie. Lorsque, par exemple, le héros, résolu à forcer sa mère à se voir, lui a jeté à la face qu'elle a tué son royal époux[8], ce n'est, dans notre *Hamlet*, qu'au ton de l'exclamation de Gertrude, à la présentation et au jeu de l'actrice, sinon à la réflexion seulement, que nous pouvons juger fausse une accusation à laquelle il croit, alors, de toute l'horreur de son âme. Dans l'in-quarto de 1603, il nous suffit de lire :

> But, as I have a soul, I swear by heaven
> I never knew of this most horrid murder[9].

1. En particulier, au lieu de Polonius, *Corambis* (= Corambus dans le *Brudermord*).

2. La rencontre de Hamlet avec Ofélia (*sic*) correspondant à notre III, II, 88 et suiv., au lieu de ne venir qu'après les assauts infructueux, de Polonius d'abord, puis des faux amis, se produit aussitôt que complotée. De même, d'ailleurs, dans le *Brudermord*.

3. Il n'est pas question de pirates. Hamlet, retenu, (on ne nous dit pas où) par les vents, découvre (comme dans notre texte) ce qu'a écrit le roi, forge aussi des lettres qui seront fatales à ses deux traîtres, puis revient (nous ne savons comment) seul en Danemark.

4. Pour le plus intéressant, historiquement, v. p. 119 n. 2.

5. De confidences entre Horatio (cp. p. 177 n. 2) et Gertrude, à laquelle il annonce le retour de Hamlet (lignes 1747-1782).

6. Le monologue destiné à devenir le plus fameux de tous n'omet point (dans un passage mutilé, d'ailleurs, jusqu'à l'absurde) ces récompenses éternelles dont « *le joyeux espoir* » (p. 109 n. 7) fait supporter les multiples injustices de cette vie.

7. Mais non sans certains avantages. Aux yeux, par ex., d'E. et O. Devrient, acteurs allemands qui firent, il y a un demi-siècle, l'expérience, le rôle principal en était, dramatiquement plus fort (Furness, II, p. 347). En France, M. G. Baty a soutenu la supériorité de cette version, (toilette du texte faite, s'entend), comme œuvre *de théâtre*, sur les suivantes, gonflées, selon lui, de littérature descriptive et digressive (notamment pour grossir la part de Burbage; cp. p. XX n. 9). Malgré l'agilité vibrante, la vive netteté, l'ingéniosité expressive de jeu (cp. p. XVII n. 3) et de costumes, avec lesquelles sa compagnie a interprété la traduction de M. Lascaris (la seconde, en français; celle de F. V. Hugo ayant paru en 1859, *Œuvres Complètes de Sh.*, t. I, *Les deux Hamlet*), — sans parler du subtil symbolisme du décor, unique, — elle semble, avoir opéré peu de conversions (novembre 1928).

8. III, IV. 29.

9. Lignes 1522-3 (orthographe modernisée pour éviter un contraste

Et quand Hamlet, beaucoup moins amer et soulevé[1] que dans notre version, conclut :

> In time, it may be you will loathe him[2] quite;
> And, mother, but assist me in revenge,
> And in his death your infamy shall die (1541-4),

elle répond aussitôt, par un vœu de la sincérité duquel elle nous donne, par la suite, d'autres[3] raisons de ne pas douter :

> Hamlet, I vow by that majesty[4]
> That knows our thoughts and looks into our hearts,
> I will conceal, consent, and do my best,
> What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise.

De la langue de la pièce primitive, d'autre part, que reste-t-il? Si celle-ci était de Kyd, rien vraiment de ce qui, sans doute, faisait l'intérêt du style. Les deux derniers vers cités présentent, il est vrai, avec un passage analogue de la *Tragédie Espagnole* une similarité d'expressions[5] qui peut être significative[6]; et l'on a pu en relever une menue dizaine[7] d'autres,

injuste, avec nos textes habituels de Sh.). La Geruthe de Belleforest avait juré « *par la haute majesté des Dieux* » qu'elle eût voulu donner sa vie pour sauver celle de son premier époux.

1. Trois fois, ailleurs, il a appelé son oncle « *father* » (nom que, dans notre *Hamlet*, il ne lui donne jamais); et celui-ci ne craint pas de lui dire « *son* » à plusieurs reprises. Dans les versions suivantes, il ne s'y risque plus après la scène II (cp. p. 19 n. 4).

2. Son second mari.

3. Dans la scène mentionnée p. XVI, n. 5, elle fait recommander à son fils par Horatio la circonspection " *lest that he Fail in whathe goes about* " (1767). Dans l'interprétation mentionnée p. XVI n. 7, tandis qu'au cours de la pièce de III, II, elle s'était gaiement prêtée aux familiarités de son second époux, elle évitait, après l'entretien avec Hamlet correspondant à III, IV, tout contact. Dans Q1 (comme ailleurs), elle intervient pourtant, ainsi que dans IV, V, pour le protéger contre l'emportement de Leartes (*sic*).

4. Cp. p. XVI n. 9.

5. Au début du 4e acte, comme Hieronimo vient de faire, devant Bel-imperia, vœu de venger enfin le meurtre de son fils,

> " *so you but give consent*
> *And will conceal my resolution,* "

Elle promet : " *I will consent, conceal;* " et lui, alors, insiste : " *whatsoever I devise.* "

6. Sans qu'elle puisse avoir (cp. p. 104 n. 3) ce caractère « d'empreinte digitale » (J. M. Robertson) qui révélerait, à ne s'y pas méprendre, la main de Kyd, et non celle, simplement, de quelque écrivailleur, utilisant ce qu'il juge être à qui s'en veut servir.

7. Y comprendre la seule qui subsiste (à une différence importante près, p. 135 n. 1) dans

bien que moins curieuses, semble-t-il. Mais, à ces vétilles près, le contraste est singulier entre l'indigence, trop souvent, (au mieux, la maigreur et le dessin quelconque[1]) de la phrase, dans les passages propres à ce premier in-quarto, et les oppositions, groupements, reprises et balancements demi-lyriques, de vocables, la sorte d'euphuisme raide, voire barbare, mais non sans vigueur, au coin duquel avait été si résolument frappée la *Tragédie*. La troupe de Shakespeare n'en aurait-elle, alors, possédé qu'une version à ce point démarquée[2]?

L'on sort, enfin, des hypothèses, dans la mesure où cela est, en matière shakespearienne, possible[3], avec *The Tragicall Historie of* HAMLET, *Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was*[4], *according to the true and perfect*[5] *Coppie. At London, Printed by I. R. for N. L.*[6].... 1604. » Réimprimé dès l'année suivante, et de nouveau en 1611,

notre texte paraît excessif. Kyd se serait-il parodié lui-même? — Quant à l'exclamation " *Hamlet, revenge*! " (p. XI), on ne la rencontre pas davantage dans cette version que dans les suivantes.

1. Ex. le monologue, I 411-1428, que remplacera III, III, 36-72.

2. D'après W. J. Lawrence (p. XIV n. 9, XV n. 7), une part de ce que Q[1] a de simpliste; l'absence de certaines allusions, classiques ou londoniennes (p. 85 n. 9), le prudemment vague " *cunning sophister* " à la place des " *ungracious pastors* " de I, III, 47 ,et " *a town bull bellow* " au lieu de " *a town crier spoke my lines* ", III, II, 4, sont parmi les signes d'adaptation à un public relativement rustique.

3. Peut-être aurais-je dû trouver place pour le soupçon que II, I, (qui a semblé addition hors d'œuvre et, au début surtout, de versification trop molle pour Sh.), le « récit d'Énée à Didon », II, II, 450 et suiv. (d'imagination si raidement intense). et l'archaïque pièce dans la pièce, (III, II; 143 suiv.) soient d'un ou plusieurs collaborateurs. Les signes qu'on en a pensé découvrir (J. M. Robertson, *Sh. and Chapman*, 1917; *The Problem of Hamlet*, 1918) m'ont paru, je l'avoue, fort douteux; et, par contre, les explications généralement reçues, vraisemblables.

4. Au lieu du 2 143 lignes, 3 719, c'est-à-dire singulièrement plus que l'on n'en pouvait débiter dans les trois heures que durait, au maximum, une représentation (E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 1923). L'expérience, faite par ex. par M. Pitoëff, à Paris, en 1926, a montré que les 3 900 lignes environ de notre *Hamlet* exigeraient (n'y eût-il pas d'entr'actes) plus de quatre heures. Autre indice que Sh. s'est, à divers moments, donné du champ, élagage et choix devant dépendre des circonstances; cp. p. II.

5. Ce qui peut, à la rigueur, confirmer seulement que la précédente publication eût été faite sur un abrégé de la pièce incomplètement refondue.

6. Nicholas Ling (un *lingue* figure d'ailleurs, au centre de la très décorative vignette); cp. p. XV. — I. R. est, sans doute, James Roberts.

Mr. WILLIAM

SHAKESPEARES

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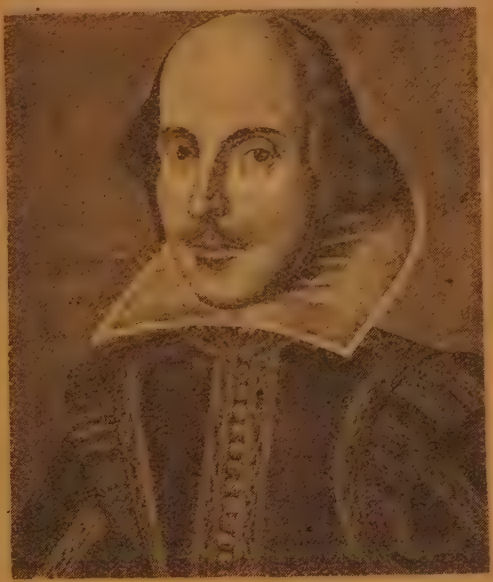

LONDON

Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

Page de Titre du Premier In-Folio
(d'après l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque Nationale).

ce n'est cependant pas le texte de ce deuxième in-quarto, mais une version jouable avec moins de peines et de frais et un succès plus assuré, que donnèrent, en 1623, les anciens camarades de Shakespeare, Heminge et Condell, dans l'in-folio intitulé *Mr. William* SHAKESPEARES *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, Published according to the True Originall Copies.* Personnages muets[1], ou d'extrême arrière-plan[2], temps, et, pour les spectateurs, efforts de pensée[3], y sont économisés. A peu près 220 lignes ont disparu[4]. Environ 85, par contre, sont imprimées pour la première fois; deux passages[5] surtout, qui, en 1604, eussent risqué d'être tenus pour offensants envers la princesse danoise devenue, un an auparavant, reine d'Angleterre et, cette année-là même, protectrice en titre des enfants-acteurs, « the Queen's Revels' Children[6]. » La plupart des quelques autres nouveautés[7] (restitutions ou additions) précisent une situation[8], complètent ou arrondissent une tirade. Certaines, sans doute, enregistrent des modifications alors habituelles au théâtre[9], et parfois malencontreuses[10]. La

1. Ex. : Un seul musicien avec flageolet dans III, II; un seul marin dans IV, VI; un seul ambassadeur au dénouement. Cp. p. 92 n. 2.

2. Au début du IV, V, plus de « gentilhomme » anonyme; Horatio parle à sa place.

3. Dans l'entrevue de Hamlet avec Osric, V, II, 40 lignes sont réduites à moins de 2; ce qui supprime la majeure (et plus malaisée) part du galimatias qui avait, au seuil du siècle, été du tout dernier galant.

4. Sont éliminés notamment : I, IV, 17 jusqu'à l'entrée du Fantôme; IV, VII, 114-123; et, avec toute la scène qui y aboutit (sauf les huit premières lignes et l'attraction du défilé guerrier), ce monologue où Hamlet lui-même se pose (IV, IV, 42-45) le problème qui demeure, pour la critique moderne, au cœur de la pièce.

5. II, II, 237 (*Let me question*) — 245 (comme, aussi, 246 — *attended*, 267) et 334-59.

6. Les irrévérences de certaines de leurs pièces, firent, d'ailleurs, que le nom subit, à divers moments, diminution et éclipses, au cours de douze années, environ, que la troupe connut encore.

7. Une vingtaine de lignes donc, en tout.

8. V, VII, 57 et 68-80.

9. Ex. "*to Yaughan,*" au lieu de "*in*" vaguement, V, I, 60. — C'est à une tradition établie par Richard Burbage, créateur du rôle shakespearien (mort en 1619), qu'on a cru (cp. de Groot) pouvoir attribuer le nombre (au total plus grand, même aux dépens du mètre) de ces répétitions pensives qui, dans toutes les versions d'ailleurs, caractérisent le Prince de Danemark.

10. Surtout l'insertion, entre "*The rest is silence,*" V, II, 357, et *Dyes*, de « *O, O, O, O,* » que Gertrude, Claudius, ni Laërte ne sembleraient par contre, avoir fait entendre.

ponctuation (beaucoup plus satisfaisante pour le lecteur moderne[1]) a quelque chose d'appuyé[2]; signe, a-t-on soupçonné de nos jours, comme la multiplication des majuscules[3], d'une diction devenue plus syntactique et oratoire qu'agilement expressive, moins conforme d'autant à certaines recommandations de la pièce même.[4] Quelques-unes des retouches d'expression, les aplanissements prosodiques, çà et là, vont aussi dans le sens d'une époque de moins de naïve et vive liberté[5]; mais plus évidente encore est la supériorité de certaines des variantes[6].

Le présent texte, comme tous ceux de ce genre, combine[7], (avec la demi-douzaine de recours usuels au premier in-quarto et un très petit nombre d'amendements devenus traditionnels), les versions, modernisées d'orthographe[8] et de ponc-

1. Q^2 n'avait par ex., dans le monologue, si méditatif pourtant, de III, I, pas de point avant la fin du vers 82 (sauf, par erreur, après 70), mais des virgules (et pas même cela entre " *to die* " et " *to sleep,* " vers 60 et 64), deux points-virgules, et juste un deux-points (après " *life,* " 69).

2. Relativement à celle de Q^2; non à l'usage moderne, auquel on s'est ici conformé.

3. A l'intérieur du vers ou de la phrase, s'entend. Ex. : au cours des 26 vers indiqués deux notes plus haut, une majuscule dans Q^2 (« *Armes,* » 59); dans F, 25 autres, dont 2 à des adjectifs et 2 à des verbes. Mais des raisons typographiques (telles que l'aspect, monumentalement soigné, ainsi donné aux pages de l'in-folio) n'expliqueraient-elles pas avec assez de probabilité l'essentiel de cette différence?

4. Début de III, II. Dans un article sur The Task of Heminge and Condell (*Studies in the First Folio*, 1924), M. J. Dover Wilson, commentant la ponctuation de Q^2 et celle de F dans la tirade de prose la plus achevée peut-être (" *I have of late...* " p. 84), a donné un exemple de ce que l'édition la plus ingénieusement vivante peut plaider pour la réhabilitation (et davantage) de Q^2, à ce point de vue. La contre-partie pourrait tenter qui aurait science et souplesse semblables.

5. En dehors de la demi-douzaine de concessions, çà et là, au statut de 1606 contre le langage profane à la scène (ex. " *Heaven* " substitué à " God, " I, II, 150; " *It seems* " à " By heaven, " II, I, 114; " *Why* à " s'wounds, " II, II, 576).

6. Une part en vient corroborer Q^1 (ex. " *French,* " II, II, 428, où Q^2 avait imprimé " *friendly* "), Exemple d'autres (encore que rendu, par le compositeur sans doute, presque méconnaissable) : " *hyre and Shallery* (i.e. hire and salary), " III, III. 79, au lieu de " base and sillv. " En revanche, le " *Pelican* " par ex. de Q^2 (IV, v, 138) est métamorphosé en " *Politician.* "

7. Sauf les quelques omissions exigées par le caractère de cette Collection.

8. Pour *caviary*, v. p. 93 n. 5; pour *blowt*, p. 159 n. 7. — Quant aux abréviations et déformations en prose (cp. en ce qui regarde les vers, p. I, n. 1), telles que *i'* pour " in ", *o'* pour " of ", *th'other*

tuation, du second in-quarto et du premier in-folio[1]. On trouvera, d'ailleurs, dans les notes, les différences principales relevées et les motifs de préférence indiqués; et de même, lorsque quelque indication scénique, devenue habituelle, a été modifiée d'après une des éditions originales.

ou *tother* pour " the other " (II, I, 56; V, II.), *for's* pour " for his "(III, II, 246, et V, II, 185, F), *all's* pour " all his " (V, II, 131, Q^2), *a* pour " he " (*passim*, et, dans Q^2, même à I, II, 185!), pour " of " (II, II, 98, F et Q^2), pour " have " (II, II, 579, Q^2), les trois éditions originales (dont l'autorité serait, au mieux, sujette à caution) se contredisent l'une l'autre et elles-mêmes. Sans prétendre aucunement trancher les problèmes, philologiques et autres, ainsi soulevés, on a cru pouvoir ici conserver, outre certaines atténuations, alors de règle sans doute (ex. *i'faith*, III, II, 94; *by'r lady*, p. 92 n. 6), quelques vulgarismes susceptibles de mettre en relief, plus dru ou plus net, la qualité du personnage (ex. les rustres de V, I) ou son état passager (ex. Ophélie, à l'acte IV).

1. Réimpressions Vietor; Marburg. 1891.

SIGNS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES THAT FOLLOW

: *i. e.*
= means obsolete or archaic.
Clarendon, or *Clar.*: Clarendon Press ed.
D., M. Derocquigny's translation.
N. E. D., *New English Dictionary* (Oxford; 1888-1928).
Encycl. Brit., *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. 1910.
F., Vietor's reprint of the first folio text.
F^2 etc., second folio (1632), etc.
J., Johnson, ed. *Plays of Sh.* (1765).
O., Onions' *Shakespearean Glossary*. 2e ed. 1919.
O. Fr., Old French.
Q^1 Vietor's reprint of the first quarto text (with that of Q^2 and of F.).
Q^2, do. of the second.
Qq, quartos.
Sh., Shakespeare.
(*Sh.*), not recorded in *N. E. D.* earlier than *Sh.*
V., Verity.

THE TRAGEDY

OF

HAMLET

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

CLAUDIUS[2], king of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present, king.
POLONIUS[3], lord chamberlain.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, OSRIC, A Gentleman, } courtiers[4].
A Priest[5].
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, } officers
FRANCISCO, a soldier.
REYNALDO, servant[6] to Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns[7], grave-diggers.
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
A Captain.
English Ambassadors.
GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius[8].
Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.
Ghost of Hamlet's Father.
SCENE : Elsinore[9].

1. *Dramatis Personae.* A list drawn up by the first critical editor of Sh's plays, the dramatic poet Rowe (1709), also his first regular biographer.

2. *Claudius.* The name actually occurs only (but both in Q^2 and F.) in the stage-direction heading sc. II; cp. IV, VII, 40 n.

3. *Polonius,* apparently meaning *the Polonian,* or, as we should now say, *the Pole.* Shakespearean geography seems vague about the respective situations of Elsinore and Poland on the map (IV, IV; cp. I, I, 63); and Shakespearean history could tolerate stranger things than the presence, at a Danish court, of a Lord Chamberlain called the Pole and whose son and daughter bear Greek names.

4. *Courtiers,* four of whose names are easily recognisable as Danish. "One Frederik Rosenkrantz, in the last decade of the XVIth century, was a member of a Danish diplomatic mission sent to Queen Bess; in 1593, he had married a Guildenstern (there were three such intermarriages between the two noble families) and was accompanied to London by his wife's brother, a Guildenstern." (Letter to the *Times Lit. Supplement,* Jan. 29. 1926, from Mr. Marcus Rosencrantz, a descendant—like the famous XVIth cent. astronomer Tycho Brahe—from one of these alliances).

5. Or Priests; see p. 220 n. 2.

6. Apparently of the higher sort; addressed as "sir" in II, I, 37.

7. *Clowns* = rustics, boors, boor-

ish fellows, intended to supply the play with boorish fun and humour.

8. *Daughter to Polonius.* Cp. n. 3.—Only the names of Hamlet and of his mother recall those in Belleforest. The rest are a medley of Latin, Italian, Danish, French, and Greek. But Latin was then international; the charm of Italian and Italian associations was widely felt; the story was Danish; "Fortinbras" (cp. note to I, 95) carries with it an atmosphere of medieval romance; "Laertes" *may* suggest sinewy suppleness; and it is not difficult to *fancy* something tender, reed-like, a little plaintive, about "Ophelia." Apart from which, most of those, in Shakespeare's audience, that may have noticed the heterogeneity thought only, no doubt, that it added variety of flavour to the general attraction of exoticism.

9. *Scene: Elsinore.* This indication too is Rowe's, and, as the immediate neighbourhood (IV, IV) is naturally included, much more accurate than the one now usual, it seems, "*Denmark.*" That the scene should change so little, is one consequence of the distinctive quality of the subject of the play.—As to the choice of Elsinore (p. IV n. 4), whose royal castle of Kronborg was finished about the middle of the XVIth century, it may well be due to the fact that a company of English actors visited the town and played there in 1585. In the following year, members of Sh.'s future company gave performances at the Danish Court; and English actors again played at Copenhagen, at the coronation of Christian IV, in 1596.

As regards division into acts and scenes, in Elizabethan plays generally, one may note that, in the "*public*" theatres, there *may* have been *originally* no breaks in the performance. When pauses inevitably came to be introduced, whether filled with music (as in the "*private*" theatres, cp. note 5, p. 86) or put to other uses, it was for the stage-manager, not the author, to distribute them. The quartos consequently ignore acts and, (explicitly at least) scenes. The folio of 1623 has *Actus Primus, Scœna Prima* (the use of Latin is significant of the scholarly quality of the afterthought), but does not carry this on farther down than the second scene of Act II. The present act-division (*not* unobjectionable; see note at the beginning of Act IV) is that of a late folio (1676). A stimulating story, told in a succession of variously stimulating scenes, was what an Elizabethan audience demanded. Nor was Shakespeare (unlike Ben Jonson, for example) trained to think of a tragedy as, according to classical precept and precedent, five acts. That these should lead up to each other with geometrical economy, or culminate in "*tableaux,*" were notions alien to the main spirit of his times and the conditions of their stage (cp. p. 3 n. 1).

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle.*

FRANCISCO *at his post*[1]. *Enter to him* BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?
Fran. Nay[2], answer me[3]: stand, and unfold yourself[4].
Ber. Long live the king!
Fran. Bernardo?
Ber. He.
Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour[5].
Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee[6] to bed, [Francisco.
Fran. For this relief[7] much[8] thanks: 'tis bitter[9] [cold[10],
And I am sick[11] at heart.
Ber. Have you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring[12]. 10

1. *At his post.* On the curtainless Elizabethan stage, *he also* was seen to "*enter*," as the original directions bid him do.

2. *Nay*, then the strictly correct equivalent of "no," when an affirmative statement was denied or obedience to an order refused, as here.

3. *Me*, emphatic.

4. *Unfold yourself* : disclose who you are yourself.

5. *Upon your hour* (cp. such other Shakespearean phrases as "upon the stroke of ten.")—A clock has apparently just been heard to strike (cp. I, IV, 4).

6. *Thee* (strictly = thyself; cp. however p. 5 n. 10). The second person singular is here used in kindly superiority; Bernardo will return to "you" in lines 10 and 12. "*Get*" also strikes a more familiar note than "go" would have done.

7. *This relief*, essentially the same as the French "*cette relève*," but tinged with the non-technical meaning of the English word.

8. *Much* : great.

9. *Bitter* : bitterly (cp. p. 40 n. 3).

10. *Cold*; which, physically and morally, that is to say dramatically, is enough. About the exact season Shakespeare is not likely to have troubled.

11. *Sick*, here = oppressed with apprehensive faintness; so that "I am *sick at heart*" (a phrase that Macbeth will use of himself, when brought to bay, V, III, 19) here = Old French, "*le cœur me défaut.*"

12. *Not a mouse stirring*; stillness, the weird quality of which is made more real by such traits as this, at once minute and familiar Cole-

Ber. Well, good night.
If you do[1] meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals[2] of my watch, bid them make haste.
Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho![3] Who's [there?

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground[4].
Mar. And liegemen to the Dane[5].
Fran. Give[6] you good night.
Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier :
Who hath reliev'd you?
Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit.*
Mar. Holla! Bernardo!
Ber. Say,
What[7], is Horatio there?
Hor. A piece of him[8].
Ber. Welcome, Horatio : welcome, good Marcellus.
Mar[9]. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?
Ber. I have seen nothing.
Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy[10],

ridge, notes on *Hamlet*, in the volume of his *Works*, entitled *Lectures on Shakespeare*).

1. *Do*, often expletive then (particularly in verse), may here, though unstressed, be explained by a certain general earnestness of tone.

2. *Rivals* = "*partners*," Q¹. "Rivals" have one and the same object.

3. *Stand, ho!* From what follows (l. 17-19) it appears that Francisco has now moved away from Bernardo to a distance *supposed* to make it difficult for the latter and the new-comers to see each other. (Cp. p. 55. n. 3).

4. *Ground* = land (cp. V, 1, 160); a use not special to Sh.

5. *The Dane* = the chief Dane, the King of Denmark, elsewhere (e. g. l. 48) called "Denmark," as if the country and he were one.

6. *Give*, elliptical, more probably here for "*May God give*," than for "*I* give" (i. e. wish) simply.

7. *What*, introducing a question; much like "well" thus placed.

8. *A piece of him*; a humorous phrase, possibly suggested by the consciousness of sceptical detachment (cp. l. 23-4). A handshake would naturally accompany the words; but Horatio's giving his hand can scarcely be all the joke. Nor, on the other side, need we imagine philosophical profundities.

9. *Hora.* in Q²; if rightly, with *this thing* cp. p. 254 n. 2.

10. *Fantasy* : fancy (its contracted form).

And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :
Therefore I have entreated him along[1]
With us to watch the minutes[2] of this night,
That if again this apparition come[3],
He may approve our eyes[4] and speak to it.
Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.
Ber. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What[5] we have two nights seen.
Hor. Well, sit we[6] down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
Ber. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his[7] course to[8] illume that part of heaven
Where now[9] it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Enter Ghost.

Mar. Peace, break thee[10] off; look, where it comes [again!

1. *Along* (after which Q² has a comma) : *to come* along with us.

2. *Minutes*, each fully sixty seconds long.

3. *Come*, subjunctive, expressive of doubt (though far from necessarily intense doubt; see p. 20 n. 7).

4. *Approve our eyes* as having seen right, confirm (a meaning not unexpected then) their testimony.

5. *What*; a construction most probably due to the practical equivalence between "*assail your ears*" and "tell you."

6. *Sit we* = let us sit; cp. e. g. l. 168 and V, I, 221, "couch we".

7. *His* then remained the usual possessive case for "*it*" as well as of "he." Since the XIVth century, the uninflected *it* might also be regarded as possessive; which, in *Hamlet*, is the case twice (I, II, 216, and V. I, 220, "*it* own life") and a dozen times in other plays of Sh.—*Its*, a late XVIth century formation, occurs, as regards Sh., ten times only and in plays first printed in F.Cp. l. 127, quotation in note.

8. *To* (which both Q² and F cut down to *t'*) : so as to.

9. *Illume* (first recorded here, and very rare; cp. *relume*, in *Othello*, V, II, 13) = "illumine" (Q¹). — *Now*; a gesture had accompanied *yond same*; cp. p. 256 n. 4.

10. *Thee*, unemphatic form of "thou," and, then, not uncommonly substituted for it after an imperative (emphatic in itself), under the

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.
Mar. Thou art a scholar[1]; speak to it, Horatio.
Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.
Hor. Most like: it harrows[2] me with fear and wonder.
Ber. It would[3] be spoke to.
Mar. Question it, Horatio.
Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark[4]
Did sometimes march[5]? by heaven I charge thee, speak!
Mar. It is offended[6].
Ber. See, it stalks away!
Hor. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!
[*Exit Ghost.*
Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.
Ber. How now[7], Horatio! you tremble and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?
Hor. Before my God, I might[8] not this believe
Without the sensible[9] and true avouch[10]

influence also of the *reflexive* thee"; cp. "get thee," l. 7.

1. *A scholar*, here, probably means chiefly one that knows Latin, the language of the Church and thus of power over spirits of all kinds. As a matter of fact, Hamlet's "*Hic et ubique*" (scene V, 156) is all the Latin in any known form of the play; but few in the audience would demand much more.

2. *Harrows*: draws a harrow over, tears up. We unconsciously use the same image whenever we speak of tribulation (ultimately from the Greek τρίβολος: harrow with three prongs).

3. *Would*, stressed. The belief that a ghost must be spoken to before it can speak itself may not be extinct yet.—*Spoke* = spoken; cp. e. g. *broke*, IV, v, 97.

4. *Denmark* = as usual in Shakespeare, the King of Denmark. Thus also "Norway" in l. 61 and "England" in IV, III, 57.

5. *Sometimes* = sometime, (sc. II, 8) formerly, once.—*March*, the gait notably of one in warlike "harness" i. e. armour.

6. *Offended*; cp. l. 62.

7. *How now*, much the same, here, as "How say you," sc. V, 121.

8. *Might* = could, as in I, II, 141.

9. *Sensible*, founded on sense-perception.

10. *Avouch* = avouch*ing* (the substantival use of the infinitive was more frequent then than now), guarantee, assurance.

Of mine[1] own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated[2];
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle[3],
He smote the sledded pollax[4] on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and jump[5] at this dead[6] hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work[7] I know not;
But, in the gross[8] and scope[9] of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now[10], sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils[11] the subject[12] of the land,

1. *Mine*, currently, though not invariably, used by Sh., when we should say "*my*," before a vowel, and then pronounced with "*i*" short, so that it glided unemphatically (e. g. sc. v, 59, in F) on to the next word (often "own", as here).

2. Apparently a remote, and (*possibly* through confusion with some other historical or semi-historical event) a much transformed, echo of the duel to the death of the two pirate chiefs in the smiling island forest.—The "combat," when Act V has been reached (sc. I, ll. 142-145 and 161-2), i. e. by the calendar a few months later, is supposed to have taken place *thirty years* back; and the question of Horatio's age has been conscientiously raised in consequence. But calendar or clock mattered to Sh. only when he chose; cp. p. 188, n. 1, and Appendix *K*.

3. *Parle*, a then not unusual synonym of parley, conference.

4. *Pollax*. See Appendix *A*.

5. *Jump*, both homelier and racier than "*just*," which F has; cp. p. 255 n. 2.

6. *Dead*, as still as death.

7. *In... work*: what particular line of thought to follow, as to the nature of the "*eruption*" (=outbreak of evil) "*boded*" thus.

8. *The gross*, cp. French "*le gros*."

9. *Scope*, general tendency (or extent of view; cp. sc. II, 37).

10. *Good* (either adverbial = "well," or, substantively, in the vocative) *now*, "a gentle exclamation of entreaty," Johnson wrote in his *Dictionary* (1755), at a time when the phrase was still in polite use for "be good enough to."

11. *Nightly*, night after night (cp. *daily*).—*Toils* (a causative use, not special to Sh.) = causes to toil.

12. *Subject*, collective.

And why such daily cast[1] of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for[2] implements of war;
Why such impress[3] of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward[4], that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day :
Who is it that can inform me?
Hor. That can I;
At least[5], the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us[6],
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate[7] pride,
Dared to the combat[8]; in which our valiant Hamlet—
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—
—Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact[9],
Well ratified by law and heraldry[10],
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seiz'd of[11], to the conqueror :

1. *Cast* = casting; cp. 57 n.

2. *Foreign mart for* = marketing for, purchase of, in foreign countries.

3. *Impress* (then, and much later, accented on the root-syllable, like the verb of the same form) = impressment, forcing into the service of the State for military purposes.

4. *Toward*, forthcoming.

5. *At least.* Habitual and graduated suspension of belief, in the absence of full evidence, is characteristic both of Horatio's temperament (cp. III, II, 66-67) and of his intellectual training (cp. e. g. 24, 67-9, 155-6, 165).

6. Last = "*late*" (Q[1]).—*Even but now*, an emphatic combination of "even (i. e. just) now" and its equivalent "but now."

7. *Emulate* (= Saxo's *emulatus*) = emulous. *N. E. D.* quotes no other instance.

8. *The*, partly due to French influence ("*au combat*") probably; but also emphatic, "the combat to the death."

9. *Compact*, the noun: but accented, here, on the second syllable.

10. *Law and heraldry* well might mean simply the law of heraldry (cp. e. g. *leave and favour*, p. 18, n. 8) heraldic law (Latin : "*jus fetiale.*") But it seems more in accord with the elaborately technical character of the whole passage to understand a distinction between the legal bond (sc. II, 24) of the "covenant" formally drawn up (II. 93-4) and the obligation, in point of honour, imposed by the nobler law of arms, of "heraldry."

11. *Stood*, more emphatic and solemn than "was."—*Seized of* : possessed of, in possession of (a legal phrase).

Against the which[1], a moiety competent[2] 90
Was gaged[3] by our king; which had return'd[4]
To the inheritance[5] of Fortinbras,
Had he[6] been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant[7]
And carriage[8] of the article design'd[9],
His[10] fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras[11], 95
Of unimproved[12] mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts[13] of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet[14], to[15] some enterprise
That hath a stomach[16] in it : which is no other— 100

1. *The which*, literally : Fr. "*lesquelles*;" but, in point of style, here more like "*lesdites*," "those foresaid" (Fr. "*susdites*") of l. 103. Cp. V, II, 149.

2. *Moiety* (with no "*e*" after the "*i*" in the original editions; which indicates the Elizabethan pronunciation), portion or quantity (of lands, apparently).—*Competent*, sufficient, or corresponding.

3. *Gaged* (disyllabic) = wagered, pledged, staked.

4. *Had* : should have.—*Return'd*, gone over rightfully.

5. *Inheritance*, in Elizabethan English, very often is, as here, a more impressive synonym of rightful possession. Cp. V, I, 112.

6. *He*, stressed.

7. *Covenant* (printed *cov'nant* in F, and apparently to be stressed, like its Old French original, "*covenant*," on the last), convention, especially one of legal validity.

8. *Carriage of* = meaning borne by.

9. *Article*: clause.—*Design'd*: contrived, drawn up, rather than = designated, already mentioned, as Schmidt thought.

10. *His* moiety = amount "gaged".

11. *Young Fortinbras*. Onename does for both father and son, as in the parallel case of "*young Hamlet*" (170) and *his* father. With *Fortinbras* (Italian: "Fortebraccio," cp. "*Ferumbras*" or "*Fierumbras*" (= "Ferri brachium" : Iron-arm), whence "*Fierabras*;" all names of a hero of medieval romance.

12. *Unimproved* (4 syllables), not turned to (better) use (cp. *to improve an opportunity*) by self- (or other) discipline. Q^0's "*unapproved*" apparently meant not put to the proof, not yet (in Elizabethan phrase, mettle *of proof* (p. 201 n. 1).

13. *Skirts* = outskirts, outlying parts.

14. *Shark'd up* : snatched up without troubling to choose (perhaps as the voracious *shark* is said to do with its prey).—*List* alludes to the roll of enlistment.—*Resolutes*, men resolute enough for any undertaking. Cp. the Italian "*bravi*."

15. *Food and diet*. The second word seems to insist on the regularity of the food allowance. *N. E. D.* gives it, in this passage, under the heading "*board*."—*To*, apparently = "for;" but see n. 16.

16. *A stomach*, as we should say, "some pluck" (cp. "*de l'estomac*").—Dowden, however, suggested a richer interpretation. Noting that neither Q^1 nor (which *may* be of greater weight) Q^2 has any stopping after "diet," he wonder-

As it doth well appear unto our state[1]—
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsatory[2], those foresaid lands
So by his father lost : and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head[3]
Of this post-haste[4] and romage[5] in the land.
Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so[6] :
Well may it sort[7], that this portentous[8] figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.
Hor. A mote[9] it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome[10],

ed whether F (whose "*landless*" for "lawless" has, in fact, not generally found favour) had not altered the original meaning; which was that the desperadoes in question would be "food and diet" (cp. Falstaff's description of his recruits, as "*food for powder,*" *First part of Henry IV*, IV, II) to one of those enterprises that devour men. *If* so, one may compare "*shark'd up*" in l. 98.

1. *State* = statesmen, rulers.

2. *Compulsatory*, Q^2 = compulsory. F has "*compulsative,*" which makes smoother scansion (p. XXI). Both words, though unwieldy enough, are found in other, and much later, writers than Sh. (though the latter is not recorded before him). In III, IV, 86, he will have "compulsive," on the type of "impulsive."—Schmidt and *O.* both make "*terms*" here = state, condition, circumstances, as in III, III, 5 and IV, VII, 26; and the former gives "on terms of (base) compulsion" (*Troilus and Cressida*, II, II, 153) = in consequence of compulsion.

3. *Head* = source. Cp. II, II, 55.

4. *Post-haste*, haste equal to that of a courier, of an express.

5. *Romage*; now *rummage* (originally : Fr. "*arrimage*), hasty preparation, bustle.—The *substance* of all this *exposition* speech belongs, in all likelihood, to some pre-Shakespearean form of the play. In *manner*, in phrasing, and chiefly by the elaborate articulation of the two long-drawn sentences of which it is made up, it seems intended largely to imitate, in verse, the slow, learned, unlovely, but proportionally impressive, style of the law. Cp. Voltimand's official report of his embassy (II, II, 60-80).

6. *Be*; subjunctive, insisting that it is only a "thought," an opinion. The whole stiff, cautious, and, at the same time, wordy line is curiously in the style of the preceding speech.—*But* = than.—*E'en* : even (mostly clipped thus in early editions) = exactly; a meaning then current.

7. *Sort*, accord with this supposition.

8. *Portentous*, gravely ominous.—F omits 109-125, obviously to save time.

9. *Mote*, particle of dust. Horatio characteristically reduces to scale, so to say, the incident that has just taken place—without denying its ominous nature.

10. *Palmy*, bearing the palm,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell[1],
The graves stood[2] tenantless and the sheeted[3] dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets[4] :
As stars with trains of fire[5] and dews of blood,
Disasters[6] in the sun : and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands[7]
Was sick almost to doomsday[8] with eclipse :
And even the like precurse of fierce events[9],
As harbingers preceding still the fates[10]

triumphant, flourishing (contrasting with the "*fierce events*" that followed).—*Rome*, of which Horatio will think again, at the final crisis (V, II, 341).

1. *A little ere*, the night before, in Sh.'s *Julius Caesar*; cp. note to l. 116.—*Mightiest* = most (which is more emphatic than "very") mighty.

2. *Stood* : remained; cp. 89.

3. *Sheeted*, in their death-sheets or shrouds.

4. Cp. *Julius Caesar*, II, II, 18; *And graves have yawn'd and yielded* [*up their dead*;

. . . . . .

And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.

Tennyson, in the *Death of Œnone*, has "the *batlike shrillings* of the Dead," the comparison being from Homer (*Odyssey*, XXIV, 5-8). There is something thin also (cp. Vergil's "*exiguam* vocem tollere." *Æneid*, VI, 492-3) about *gibber* (not recorded before Sh., nor again for a century and a half).

5. The gap between this line and the preceding one must be due to the omission of at least one line, such as that suggested by Mr. Verity : "*And portents strange amazed the element*" (= sky). North, in his rendering of Amyot's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans compared together* (1579), mentions "fires in *the element*."—*As*: such as.—*Stars with trains of fire*, i. e. comets, "*that presage the fall of kingdoms*," as Marlowe had written, in his translation of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia* (registered in 1593; first published, it seems, in 1600, and very likely known to Shakespeare, whether it influenced him, here, or not). Lucan there describes the prodigies with which "*the angry threat'ning gods filled both the earth and seas*," and the skies also, when Caesar, having crossed the Rubicon, marched on Rome itself. Plutarch mentions "the *great comet* which, seven nights together, was seen very bright *after* Caesar's death" (Cp. Vergil's "*diri cometae*," *Georg. I*, 488).

6. *Disasters* = unfavourable aspects, in the original, astrological, sense. Plutarch again (like Vergil, *ibid.* 466-468) mentions the darkening of the sun *after* Caesar's death.—*Moist star*, the moon; then supposed to draw up moisture from this world, as well as to govern its distribution.

7. On whose influence the ebb and flow of the sea depend.

8. *Doomsday*, when "*the moon shall not give her light*" (Matt. XXIV, 29).

9. *Even*, p. 10 n. 6.—*Precurse* (Sh.) = precurrence. — *Fierce*, violent in the extreme.

10. *Harbingers* : French "*fourriers*," forerunners (cp. "*precurse*"), preparing the reception.—*Still* =

And prologue to the omen[1] coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated[2]
Unto our climatures[3] and countrymen.

Re-enter Ghost.

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though[4] it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me[5]:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me[6],
Speak to me:
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing[7] may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk[8] in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! [*Cock crows.*] Stop it,
[Marcellus.

constantly,—*Fates*: fated events, events decreed by fate.

1. *Prologue*, a professional Shakespearean metaphor; cp. IV, v, 18 and V, II 30-31.—*The omen*: the *event pointed at by* the omen (the antecedent being used for the consequent).

2. *Demonstrated* (accented on the first) = exhibited, displayed.

3. *Climatures* (Sh.) = climates, regions (*N. E. D.*).

4. *Though*, in the sense of the French "*quand bien même.*"—*Blast* (subjunctive): may, or should, strike me with its evil influence (under which I shall fall by crossing its path).—*Illusion*, very nearly = phantom.—Opposite this line (and the next) Q^2 has the stage direction "*It spreads his* (p. 5 n. 7) *armes.*"

5. The solemnity of the appeal, or charge rather, makes the three words fully equivalent, in effect, to a whole ordinary line. Cp. l. 135, just two intensely pathetic syllables; also, e. g. 142.

6. *Do grace to me* = set me in a gracious (i. e, favourable) light. "Grace," it may not be amiss to note here, often has, in Sh., religious or semi-religious associations. Cp. sc. IV, 33; IV, v, 122 and 171; also, presently (l. 164) "*gracious.*"

7. *Happily* = haply (now obsolete, but then frequent), perhaps.—*Foreknowing*: knowing it beforehand.

8. *Spirits*, pronounced apparently as little more than a single syllable, by slurring either the first (cp. the French "*esprit*" and the English "*spright*") or the second (cp. the Italian *spir'to*, in verse, for "*spirito*") as in l. 61, though not in 154 and 171.—*Walk* the earth, revisit it.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan[1]?
Hor. Do, if it will not stand[2].
Ber. 'Tis here!
Hor. 'Tis here!
Mar. 'Tis gone! [*Exit Ghost.*
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence[3];
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows, malicious mockery[4].
Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.
Hor. And then it started[5] like a guilty thing[6]
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to[7] the morn,
Doth with his lofty[8] and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air[9],
The extravagant and erring spirit hies[10]
To his confine[11]: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation[12].

1. *Partisan* (French "*pertuisane,*" a corruption of the Italian name, under the significant influence of "*pertuis,*" i. e. hole), a kind of *halberd,* cunningly combining a broad lance-head with one or more lateral blades (shaped so as to displace armour as well as to inflict a variety of wounds). About 9 ft. long (and a *gentleman's* weapon down to the beginning of the XVIIIth century), it can still be seen, in England, in the hands of the so-called "beef-eaters," the *Yeomen* (cp. p. 230 n. 2) *of the Guard.* Were not Marcellus and Bernardo officers in *the Dane's* guard?

2. *Stand*: halt, as in l. 2.

3. *Offer it*: attempt to inflict on it.—*The show of violence*: what can be violence only in appearance.

4. *Malicious,* manifesting malice (i.e. intention to hurt).—*Mockery*: mimicry, gestures and (ludicrously) no more.

5. *Started,* gave a start, made a sudden involuntary movement.

6. *Thing*: being, but, with an added touch, here, of pity for the helplessness of it.

7. *Trumpet* = trumpeter.—*To,* more official than "of;" by appointment, so to say.

8. *Lofty*: "*sounding*" both on high and commandingly.

9. In any of the four elements.

10. *Extravagant,* not used figuratively of course but = roving out of bounds, literally.—*Erring* = wandering, also literally.—*Hies* = hastens.

11. *His*; cp. p. 5 n. 7, p. 12 n. 4.—*Confine* (accented, here, on the last) = habitual place of confinement.

12. *Probation* (quadrisyllabic, with the *t* then sounded like *s*) = proof. Note the abstract, scholastic quality

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst[1] that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad[2],
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike[3],
No fairy takes[4] nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious[5] is the time.
Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But look, the morn, in russet[6] mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill :
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young[7] Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him :
Do you consent[8] we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves[9], fitting our duty?

of this logical conclusion to a speech not lacking in movement and colour.

1. *Gainst* = against, shortly before, in preparation for the time when.

2. *Abroad*, out of " his confine. "

3. *Strike*; cp. note on " *blast* " I. 127.

4. *Takes* = " strikes " with *evil* " charms. " Contrast " taking " in the sense of attractive.

5. *Gracious*, bestowing blessings from above, because thus blessed itself (" *hallowed*. ")—The effect of the speech is indeed one of " gracious " purification for the moment, and, so far, not unlike the famous passage on " the temple-haunting martlet, " with which the saintly Duncan and Banquo open the sixth scene of *Macbeth*.

6. *Russet* (= Fr. " *rousset* ") was first the name of a kind of coarse homespun woollen cloth (reddish-brown, *or* grey, *or* of some neutral colour), worn by peasants. Reddish brown is the hue now generally meant; and the touch has even been fancied to be a bit of Northern local colour. Newton, however, a hundred years after *Hamlet*, still has, in a passage of his *Optics*, which Johnson quoted in his *Dictionary* (1755), " russet or dark grey. " In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, II, 21, choughs, i. e. jackdaws (cp. note, here, on V. II, 89), are described as " russet-pated, " which must refer to the ash-coloured parts of the jackdaw's head; and it may well be that what is suggested here (together with homely, rustic associations) is those earliest grey streaks of dawn of which Romeo speaks in *R. and J.*, III, v, 19.

7. *Young* does not *necessarily* mean younger than the speaker or even than the two officers, but " Hamlet *the younger* " (= the son), probably enough. Cp. p. 9 n. 11, but also Appendix *K*.

8. *Consent* = agree.

9. *Needful in our loves* = the love (i. e. affection) each of us, severally, bears him obliges us to do.

Mar. Let's do it, I pray; and I this morning[1] know
Where we shall find him most conveniently[2]. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room of state*[3] *in the castle.*

FLOURISH. *Enter* CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK, GERTRUDE *the* QUEEN, COUNCIL, *as* POLONIUS *and his son* LAERTES, HAMLET, *with Others*[4].

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's
The memory be green, and that it us befitted[5] [death
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of[6] woe,
Yet so far hath discretion[7] fought with nature
That we with wisest[8] sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves[9].
Therefore our sometime sister[10], now our queen,

1. *Morning.* Only commentators will remember this, when Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo join him and he wishes Bernardo "Good *even*" (II, 167). Cp. p. II n. 2.

2. *Conveniently,* as regards time, place, and the absence of "inconvenient" company.

3. *A room of state* : "*Salle de parement*" (D.), "parement" being an old word = modern "*parade,* cérémonie."

4. *Flourish... others.* These indications of Q[2] were apparently intended for professionals, and to be interpreted according to the number of supernumeraries available at the time of performance; whence "*as*" (i. e. such as) and "with others" ("*cum aliis*" in the original). They have over those of F., generally given, the advantage of detaching Hamlet, to some extent, from the royal couple, instead of making him conform to etiquette by entering *after his* mother and *before* the Lord Chamberlain.

5. *Be,* subjunctive, then usual after "though."—*Green,* fresh.—*That,* apparently to avoid repeating "though"; cp. p. 197 n. 13.—*Us,* here, me and my Queen; but presently (l.10) Claudius, will use the plural to speak of his royal self alone.

6. *Of,* expressing.

7. *Discretion.* The two first senses in Littré are : "1° qualité par laquelle on *discerne,* on juge; 2° réserve, *retenue prudente.*"

8. *Wisest* : most wise. Cp. I, 114.

9. In simpler language, without forgetting ourselves, i. e. ourself essentially ("and we love *ourself,*" IV, III, 34), though the plural well may be intended, subtly enough, to embrace "our queen." Generally speaking, everything in this first speech of Claudius, whether vocabulary, phrasing, syntax, or prosody, makes for volume (l. 2 for example was an Alexandrine) even more than for real weight. This king knows how to roar.

10. *Sometime,* (p. 6 n. 5), formerly, former. Fr. "*ci-devant*".

The imperial jointress to[1] this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated[2] joy,—
With an auspicious[3] and a dropping[4] eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole[5],—
Taken to wife[6] : nor have we herein barr'd[7]
Your better[8] wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along[9]. For all, our thanks[10].
Now follows that[11] you know : young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth[12],
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death[13]
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame[14],
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage[15],

1. *Imperial*; cp. notably "This realm of England is an Empire," the declaration made by the Parliament of 1532-1533, asserting both the independence of its "imperial" sovereigns and their equality with the head of the Holy Roman Empire itself.—*Jointress*, widow holding a jointure, dowager; *to*, in relation to (the possession of). F has "of," less formal and emphatic at once (cp. p. 13. n. 7; p. 128 n. 7.), and inferior so far.

2. *Defeated*, probably = disfigured (cp. Fr. "*defait*"), as elsewhere in Shakespeare. *N. E. D.* has also xvth century instances.

3. *Auspicious*, fortunate; hence, happy, joyful.

4. *Dropping* tears. — For "*one ...and one*", Q² had, less heavily, "*an ...and a.*"

5. *Dole* (Old French "*doel*" = "*deuil.*") = grief. The double alliteration with "*delight*" adds relief to this last balanced antithesis.

6. *Taken to wife.* The diplomatic periods, cautious involutions, and parallel antitheses of the thirteen first lines form so many defences of the vulnerable spot; and another will be added at once.

7. *Herein*, in this matter.—*Barr'd*, excluded.

8. *Better* than ours.

9. *With this affair along* : with "us" to the end of "'this affair;" so that you, having been "our" counsellors, are bound to stand by "us" in this matter.

10. *Our thanks*, the thanks of one whose words and thanks matter. Cp. the imperious as well as "imperial" tone of 25-27 and 36-38, also II, II, 25-6.

11. *That*, apparently = that that, that which, what. Hence the punctuation adopted here; Q² has none; F, just a comma after "*follows.*"

12. *Supposal* = supposition, conjecture, opinion.—*Our worth* : our personal merit, especially in matters of war and *valour*. Neither had Fengo, in the old story, done anything that could compare with his brother's exploits.

13. *Our.... death*; a slight variation of the edifying official phrase with which the whole speech opened.

14. *Out of frame* : no longer holding firmly together and capable of resistance, being *disjoint* (= disjointed, cp. note on *deject*, III, I, 155).

15. Having, to support him *like an ally*, this illusion of a favourable,

He[1] hath not fail'd to pester us with message[2],
Importing[3] the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting[4]:
Thus much the business is: we have here writ[5]
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras—
Who, impotent and bed-rid[6], scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose—to suppress
His further gait[7] herein; in that[8] the levies,
The lists and full proportions[9], are all made
Out of his subject[10]: and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope[11]
Of these delated articles allow[12].
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty[13].

Cor. } In that and all things will we show our duty
Vol. }

King. We doubt it nothing[14]: heartily farewell.

[Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.

chance for him. *Colleagued* (O. F. *colligue* = *ligué*); no other instance in *N. E. D.*

1. *He*, rather stiffly explicit.

2. *Message*, collective.

3. *Importing*, purporting; cp. IV, III, 62.

4. *This time of meeting*: the reason for which we meet *now*.

5. *Writ* = written (cp. p. 6, n. 3) On the origin of such abbreviations, then current, see Abbott, § 343.

6. *Impotent*, as in French.—*Bed-rid*, obliged to keep his bed.

7. *Gait* = proceeding.

8. *In that* = inasmuch as.

9. *Lists*: cp. I, 98.—*Full proportions*: full numbers, proportioned, suited, to his purpose.

10. *Subject*, collective as in I, 72.

11. *To business*: for the purpose of business, to discuss and arrange affairs.—*More*, emphasizing "*further*" in the preceding line; cp. n. 1.—*Scope*, range.

12. *Delated* (if = *dilated* F.) set forth at large.—Another interpretation, "conveyed," seems forced and lacks point.—*Allow*, plural (unless the compositor dropped an *s*) because the nearest noun is "articles" and, with a different construction, might be the subject.

13. *Commend* = present as, show to be, worthy of praise.—*Duty*: sense of your duty (to us).

14. *Nothing*, used adverbially: not at all.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you[1]?
You told us of some suit; what is it, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose[2] your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking[3]?
The head is not more native[4] to the heart,
The hand more instrumental[5] to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father[6].
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread[7] lord,
Your leave and favour[8] to return to France[9];
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to[10] your gracious leave and pardon[11].

King. Have you your father's leave? What says [Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave

1. *You*, which will presently change into a still more affectionate "*thou*."—As for "*Laertes*", the King will repeat the name over and over again, as caressingly as if he were in love with it, for the bearer's sake.

2. *Lose*: thus use in vain.

3. Which I will not grant so readily that it will be like "'offering" it, not *granting* it merely to thy "asking." Note the change from the more humble "*beg*" to "ask."

4. *Native*: naturally related. Cp. IV, VII, 179.

5. *Instrumental*: serviceable.

6. Building up for ourselves what Sh. does *not* tell us of the history of his characters is not explaining his text; but must not "the good old" Lord Chamberlain (IV, I, 12) have been "'instrumental" in securing "the throne of Denmark" for its present occupant?

7. *Dread*: an epithet that Claudius is sure to appreciate all the more because of the lovingly caressing tone he himself had chosen to adopt. Cp. the repetition of "*duty*" presently, in connection with lines 39 and 40.

8. *Leave and favour* = favourable (= kindly) permission.

9. *France*, as a pleasant kind of finishing-school for fine manners and courtly breeding. Cp. Scene III 73-74, and contrast presently Hamlet's "thoughts and wishes," which "bend toward" Wittenberg.

10. *Bow them to* = bow to you to obtain; with "them" cp. l. 115 and I, 7, n.

11. *Pardon* = indulgent permission, slightly more emphatic than "favour" at the beginning of the speech.

By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard[1] consent :
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.
King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine[2],
And thy best graces[3] spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son[4], —
Ham. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than
[kind[5].
King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you[6]?
Ham. Not so, my lord : I am too much in the sun[7].

1. *Hard* : laboriously obtained. The Folio omits "*strange... consent,*" thus robbing the Lord Chamberlain's answer of its characteristically slow ponderousness.

2. *Take thy fair hour.* Cp. Horace's "Carpe diem."; *Clar.* understanding, it seems, "take advantage of the fair time of youth, which now is thine.") Perhaps some such rendering as "*Cueille l'heure qui te rit*" might suggest both this wider meaning and the more definite application.—*Be*, 3d person of the imperative, like *spend* in l. 63.

3. *Best graces*, "ce qu'en toi le ciel a logé de meilleur" (Derocquigny) and what is most delicately charming in thee too. Cp. note to sc. I, 131 as well as to sc. IV, 34. and IV, VII, 21.

4. *But*, instead of "*and*" as in l. 42, betrays the King's sense of difficulty.—*Cousin* was then frequent for "nephew", as well as for other degrees of kinship. As to *son*, after tentatively risking this, the "uncle-father" (II, II, 373) pauses a little, to watch the effect; which is such that only once (l. 117) and at the close of a most elaborate speech, will he venture on it again. That, in Q1, he repeatedly does so, is one of its minor obtusenesses.

5. (*Aside*) not in any edition before the middle of the XVIIIth century. Whether spoken aloud or (as seems more likely and might be more significant) to himself, Hamlet's first words are an ironical quibble, *not* unnatural from an Elizabethan, but rather obscurely discharging a meaning that is deeply felt. Here, *kin* obviously glances back at "cousin." *Kind* (no less obviously glancing back at "son") most probably means the same as in *Henry V, Prol. II*, 19 ("Were all thy children *kind* and natural, ") : having natural, i. e. filial, feelings.—If the line applies to the King, the natural feelings would be the fatherly.

6. *You*, not "thee." Contrast l. 45.

7. *In the sun* explains the King's metaphor, but also bitterly takes up again and plays on (cp. 65 n.) the intolerable "*son*" of l. 64. The phrase here seems to be susceptible of two meanings at least (Cp. Introduction p. VI n. 3) : one on the surface, "I am too much in the *sunshine radiated by the King*" (cp. 116); and another, not ironical : "I am too much in the relation of *sun*: son to a dead father, son to an incestuous mother, son to an uncle-father." (Dowden).—*Perhaps* Johnson was right also in supposing [illegible] to a proverbial phrase of the time, found in *King Lear*, for example, and still used by Swift, "out of heav-

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour[1] off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark[2].
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids[3]
Seek for thy noble father in the dust :
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature[4] to eternity.
Ham. Ay[5], madam, it[6] is common.
Queen. If it be[7],
Why seems it so particular with thee[8]?
Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems[9].'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary[10] suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath[11],
No, nor the fruitful[12] river in the eye[13],
Nor the dejected haviour[14] of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods[15], shapes of grief,

en's blessing into the warm sun" i. e. brought from good to bad, cast out of house and home, unprotected, deprived of some rights at least?

1. *Nighted* (whether first used thus by Sh. or not) obviously = made to have the appearance of night, night-like ("*nightly*" in F.)—*Colour*, the "'inky cloak" and "suits of solemn black" of 77-78. it seems; Gertrude apparently touches on *dress* first.

2. *Thine*; cp. p. 7 n. 1.—*Denmark*, like "Norway" in I. 61.

3. *Vailed* = lowered (oldest sense of the French "*avaler*").—*Lids* : eyelids.

4. *Nature* : this world (cp. "my days of nature" I, v. 12).—Lines 72-73 form a sententious couplet, followed by another, that clinches the argument (as 85-86 will sum up 77-84).

5. *Ay*, printed "I" in old editions; which indicates the pronunciation.

6. *It*, after "madam," is probably stressed, however slightly, for something else is *not* common.

7. *Be*, subjunctive, following "*if*" for reasons of mere syntax; not suggesting doubt. Cp. V, II, 234 and 237.

8. *With thee*, in thy case.

9. *Hamlet*, pouncing on the objectionable word, but not troubling to give the too obvious, and to him unbearable, reason.

10. *Customary*. The force of the word on Hamlet's lips will soon be revealed to us (ll. 133-134).

11. *Suspiration*, heaving of breath in sighing.—*Forced*, produced with effort, labouring.

12. *Fruitful* = copious (chiefly in Shakespeare, *N.E. D.*).

13. *The eye*, "all tears," 149.

14. *Haviour* = behaviour; *haviour of the visage* : countenance, expression of the face.

15. *Moods* : changing *modes* of display; a very late quarto (1695) *has* "modes."

That can denote me truly[1] : these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play[2] :
But I have that within which passeth show[3]; 85
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.[4]

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable[5] in your nature, [Hamlet,
To give[6] these mourning duties to your father :
But, you must know, your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound[7] 90
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow[8] : but to persever
In obstinate condolement[9] is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief :
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven[10], 95
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd[11] :
For what we know must be, and is as common[12]

1. *Denote me* : be true *outward notes* (= signs) of what I am inwardly.—*I truly*. Note the unaccented syllable, as frequently, at the caesura.

2. *Actions.... play* = gestures (cp. I, IV, 60; III, II, 15) that might be made, attitudes that might be assumed, in merely "acting" grief, as in a "play."

3. *Passeth show*, is beyond anything that is, or can be, shown.

4. *Trappings* ("ornaments" Q^1), altogether external and, as it were, appendage-like accoutrements for "shows."—For the "couplet" form, cp. 73 n.

5. *Sweet* (then more freely used than now, cp. V, I, 83), lovable as showing lovingness.—*Commendable*, then normally accented on the first. Here, the *secondary* accent on the third should probably be rather marked, the king being a speaker of weight—as well as a cautious one, feeling his way (cp. p. 16 n. 6) to the final "*Hamlet*" (contrast p. 18 n. 1). According to the usual mode of scansion, the line is an Alexandrine ending in something like suspense.

6. *Give*, render.

7. *Bound*. The same vigorous ellipsis, will occur, it seems, in another speech of Claudius, III, III, 62.

8. *Do obsequious sorrow* render the sorrow that is due to the dead, as at their obsequies.

9. *Persever*, the usual spelling and accentuation, then, for "persevere."—*Condolement* = intense sorrowing.

10. *Incorrect*; uncorrected, indocile to correction.—*To* = towards; cp. "obedient" (or "disobedient") *to*, though "obey" is transitive.—*Heaven*; "for whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth" (*Book of Proverbs*, III, 12).

11. *Unschool'd* : untaught in a school higher than "Wittenberg," 113.

12. Construe : as any thing (that is) the most vulgar to sense (Fr.

As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish[1] opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to[2] heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so'[3]. We pray you, throw to earth[4]
This unprevailing[5] woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate[6] to our throne;
And with no less nobility[7] of love
Than that which dearest[8] father bears his son,
Do I impart toward[9] you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg[10],

"*tombe le plus communément sous le sens.*")

1. *Peevish.* The dominant meaning is the original one, "foolish."

2. *To* = against; cp. 95 and next scene, 44.

3. *Still*, p. 11 n. 10.—*Corse*, an earlier form, now "somewhat poetic and archaic" (*N. E. D.*), of "corpse."—*Till he* = down to him.

4. *To earth*: "in the dust" (l. 71), whither dust "returneth" p. 219 n. 4.

5. *Unprevailing* (that cannot prevail against the order of Nature and the will of Heaven, practically: "unavailing;" but in fuller accord with the general tone of the speech.

6. *Most immediate to*: nearest to, apparently with an idea of succession to. The Danish throne was elective ("Popp'd in between th' election and my hopes," Hamlet will say of this most loving uncle-father, V, II, 65); but such a declaration might be thought equivalent to "You shall have my dying voice" (cp. V, II, 356).

7. *Nobility*, generous greatness. One may compare the use of "*dignity*", sc. V, 48.

8. *Dearest*: most dearly loving (and thus to be most dearly loved).

9. *Impart* normally requires some direct object. Dowden suggested that "it" (or "*'t*"?) *might* have been dropped. Johnson understood "impart *myself*" i. e. communicate whatever I have to bestow; Schmidt, "bestow *such* fatherly *love*". Mr. Onions, without rejecting Johnson's interpretation as impossible, would also prefer to supply "love" as the object; but "*impart*," here, he classes under the heading "to communicate, *make known*, tell" (cp. III, II, 300). The preposition, as Schmidt had said, would then *partly* depend on "love."—Mr. Verity explains away the "*with*" in l. 110 by an intention, then, to finish the sentence in some such way as "am I disposed toward you."

10. *In*: in the matter of.—*School in* = the University of.—*Wittenberg*, "the place where *wit* grows," as Chettle called it in his *Hoffman*

It is most retrograde to our desire[1]:
And we beseech you, bend you[2] to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest[3] courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers[4], Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam[5].

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair[6] reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle[7] and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart[8]: in grace[9] whereof,

(1602), the University of Martin Luther and also of another doctor, still better known probably to Elizabethan play-goers, Dr. Faustus. Founded in 1502, it would seem to have been a favourite with Danish students in Sh's time (cp. p. 68 n. 9).—Hamlet's "intent" is one of the points that raise the question of his age. In an English University then, a young nobleman would usually be between 17 and 19; and, even if Danes were actually *much* more backward (as Nashe had satirically reported in his *Pierce Penniless, his Supplication to the Devil*, 1592), Sh. can scarcely have wished that his audience should think thus of his Hamlet. Cp. the general impression made by his attitude in this scene and, in the next, the sufficiently explicit II. 7, 11, and 124. See however also Appendix *K*.

1. *Retrograde*: contrary and, according to Tschischwitz (1869), in an astrological acceptation of the word. "When the planets were retrograde, that is, when they were going away from the earth's orbit (viz. moving in a direction *contrary* to the order of the signs of the Zodiac), they were, under certain circumstances, hostile to human plans."—*Our desire*, possibly the truth; "a criminal never feels secure save when he can keep his eye on all whom he mistrusts" (F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*). IV, VII, 11-16, will, however, suggest another (and a simpler) motive for the eventually fatal request. In Q^1 the king actually says now:

"*We hold it most unmeet and unconvenient,*
Being the joy and half heart of your mother".

2. *Bend you* (p. 18 n. 10): Fr. "*pliez-vous.*"

3. *Chiefest*, a pre-eminent superlative congenial to the vehement spirit of those times (cp. p. 26 n. 7; p. 43 n. 9).

4. *Prayers*; p. 144 n. 6.

5. *Hamlet*, "pliant, from the first, where action is concerned" (Boas). But genuine affection had dictated the Queen's simple request (cp. again IV, VII, 10-11), and Hamlet cannot but have felt something of this (in spite of his "*shall*," his "*obey*" and his distant "*madam*").—*In all my best* = do my very best to.

6. *Fair*, that draws love.

7. *Gentle*; cp. *gentry*, II, II, 22.

8. *Sits... to my heart*, probably: sits close to my heart (*Clar.*); "sits" = lies, with an added shade of fitness. But "to my heart" may well be governed by "smiling" also.

9. *Grace* = honour; cp. II, II, 53.

No jocund health that Denmark drinks[1] to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell[2],
And the king's rouse[3] the heavens shall bruit again[4],
Re-speaking earthly thunder[5]. Come away.
[*Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

Ham. O, that[6] this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve[7] itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter![8] O God! God[9]!
How weary, stale, flat[10], and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on it! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden[11]
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature[12]

1. *Denmark*, as in I, 48.—*Drinks*; cp. note on l. 175.

2. *Tell* it.

3. *Rouse* (which *N. E. D.* suspects to be a corruption of "*carouse*," and not a word adopted from the Danish or the Scandinavian) here = full draught: Fr. *rasade*. The spelling of F, "rouce", indicates the original pronunciation.

4. *Bruit again* = report in loud echoes.—The custom was a Danish one. On July 14, 1603, at a banquet offered to "the Dane" of those days, Christian IV, on board an English ship lying off Elsinore, every health was thus reported by 6, 8, or 10 "*shot of great Ordnance*," the grand total of these reaching 160 (Diary of William Segar, Garter King at Arms). When His Majesty returned the compliment on land, the festivities were bacchanalian to such a degree that the English ambassador took leave before he need have done so.

5. *Earthly thunder*. Both the ear and the imagination of Claudius are partial to artillery. Cp. e. g. III, II, 241; IV, I, 42-3; VII, 153.

6. *That*, expressing a wish.—*Too too*; an intensive reduplication, then common.

7. *Resolve*: dissolve back.

8. *Canon* (which both Q^2 and F. print *cannon*); cp. the distinction in *Timon of Athens*, IV. III, 60, between "religious canon" and "civil laws." The allusion *may* be to the Sixth Commandment. "Thou shalt not kill" (in the *Church of England Catechism*, "Thou shalt do no murder").—*Self-slaughter*; the word *suicide* was not English yet.

9. F. has *O God*! evenly (cp. p. 10 n. 2).

10. *Weary*, causing weariness.—*Stale*, having *stood* exposed too long and thus become vapid, *flat*.

11. *Fie*, expressing intense moral disgust, indistinguishable from physical (cp. n. 12).—*Unweeded*, not cleared of weeds, which have thus been allowed to "*grow to seed*," pullulate, and usurp it, to the exclusion of true garden-plants.

12. *Rank*, coarsely luxuriant.—The comparison with rank weeds will reappear in Hamlet's adju-

Possess it merely[1]. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two :
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr[2]: so loving to my mother[3]
That he might not beteem[4] the winds of heaven
Visit[5] her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him[6],
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on : and yet, within a month[7]—
Let me not think on it—Frailty[8], thy name is woman!—
A little month! or ere[9] those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe[10], all tears, why she, even she—

ration to his mother (III, iv, 151, 152); and *gross in nature* may be intended to apply to her, as it certainly does to the "*blowt King*" (III, iv, 179) that now "*possesses*" her love, together with the throne of Denmark. Sweeping as Hamlet's generalisation is, peculiarities of the personal experience at its source palpably colour it.

1. *Merely* = without admixture, exclusively.—*That*, expressing indignant astonishment.

2. *Hyperion* (accented, incorrectly, but, so far as English poetry is concerned, definitively, on the "*e*," which thus becomes alphabetical, whilst "*i*" is short), the sun-god, as in Homer's *Odyssey*, and, thus, all radiant beauty (cp. "Hyperion's curls" III, iv, 56).—*To* : compared to *a satyr*, who is half goat and haunts the dark woods.

3. *My mother*. *Her* conduct it is (not what Hamlet knows as yet of his father's death and his uncle's accession) that has already poisoned his soul.

4. *Might* = could, as in I, 56; *beteem* (from "*be*," intensive + "*teem*," obsolete = think fit) = allow: followed, like "let," by the infinitive without "to."

5. *Visit*, come to and affect.

6. *Must*. The remembrance *forces* itself upon Hamlet, fight against it as he may (cp. "*Let me not think on it*" l. 146). In technical phrase, always subconsciously present, it invades consciousness more and more, whatever efforts he may make to check and drive it back. Cp. Clutton Brock's very attentively suggestive chapter entitled "Why Hamlet delayed." (*Sh.'s Hamlet*; 1922)—*Would hang* : was fond of hanging and used to do so.

7. *Within a month* of the funeral and so (l. 138) less than two months after the death. The remarriage it is that has made the murdered king revisit the earth. Cp. n. 3.

8. *Frailty*, in the sense in which Cleopatra confesses herself "laden with frailties" common to "her sex" (*Ant. and Cl.* V, ii, 123). For the generalising impulse cp. e. g. III, iv, 40-8.

9. *Or ere*, more emphatic than "ere," because, historically, a reduplication of it; cp. note on 183.

10. *Niobe*, "all tears" for her

O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason[1], 150
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules[2] : within a month :
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous[3] tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes[4], 155
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity[5] to incestuous[6] sheets!
It is not nor it cannot[7] come to good :
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

seven sons and seven daughters, slain by the arrows of Apollo and Diana, Latona's son and daughter.

1. *Discourse of reason*, generally understood, as = reasoning thought, which passes, for example, from premises to consequences. Here, more particularly, it seems, range of reasoning thought, power of not seeing the present only but "looking *before*" as well as "after." Cp. note on IV, IV, 36-7.

2. *Than I to Hercules.* Neither comparison need be *merely* physical: Hercules rid the world of evil after evil. Cp. V, I, 292-3; also e. g. what Mellida says to Antonio in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, V, II (a play generally considered as related to *Hamlet*) :

"*Thou art another Hercules to us,*
In ridding huge pollution from our state;

and Hamlet is far from imagining such power in himself (sc. V, 189-190). Even physically, however, it would be rash to conclude from this outburst of self-disparagement that he is a weakling. Apart from such utterances of his as I, IV, 85 and V, I, 262, and from what he does before our eyes in V, II, 325, note the King's alarm for Laertes in V, I. 264, when they grapple with each other. Nor is it likely that Burbage, who created the part but also e. g. that of Othello, gave that impression. As to, V, II, 287, see App. *M*.

3. *Unrighteous*, for her conduct soon proved that she did not then feel as it was *right* she should.

4. *The flushing in her galled eyes.* Q^2; Q^1 had *their* for *the*; F. has *of* for *in*.—Why not take this as practically = her flushed-and galled eyes? Whether "*flushed*" = reddened, as e. g. Mr. Onions thinks, or, as *Clarendon* appears to take it, "flooded" ("the fruitful river of the eye" would certainly be the case with a Gertrude), is a minor question. Before her tears had had time to redden her eyes at all", and "before they had ceased to produce redness", are interpretations that seem to imply very awkward phrasing.—*Galled*, made sore by salt tears.

5. *Dexterity* = agility.

6. *Incestuous*, marriage with a brother-in-law being such in the eyes of the Church, whose "canon" Hamlet here shows no inclination to reject. Of his mother's previous guilt, he is ignorant still.

7. *Nor it cannot*, II, I, 11.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!
Ham. I am glad to see you well :
Horatio,—or I do forget myself[1]. 161
Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name[2] with you :
And what make you[3] from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus[4]— 165
Mar. My good lord—
Ham. I am very glad to see you[5]. Good even, sir
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord[6].
Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so, 170
Nor shall you[7] do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of[8] your own report
Against yourself : I know you are no truant[9].

1. How long it must be since Hamlet left the University for him not to recognise at once such a close friend as Horatio (see e. g. III, II, 58-60), is one of those questions of chronology (other than dictated by considerations of dramatic effect; on which see p. 188 n. 1) about which Sh. is likely to have troubled as little as his audience surely did. Besides, at l. 160, Hamlet well may have been half lost in thought still.—The psychological interest of the line centres, in any case, in the more than hearty "*or I do forget myself.*"

2. *Change*: exchange.—*That name* of "servant," of "*poor* servant" even; p. 56 n. 5.

3. *What make you?* not rare then for "what are you doing?"—*From* = away from; cp. III, IV, 144.

4. *Marcellus*, usually printed, since the middle of the XVIIIth century, with a question-mark after it. But why, as Prof. Bradley observes, should Hamlet have a difficulty in recognising Marcellus, who apparently *lives* at Elsinore? Q^2 and F (not to mention Q^1) have a full stop, as frequently when a sentence is broken off : e. g. at the end of I. 39 sc. I, and I. 23, sc. v.

5. *To see you*; a phrase that, contrasted with "to see you *well*" (l. 160), tends to confirm the preceding note.—The *Good even, sir*, to Bernardo will be yet another, a more distant, shade of welcome.

6. *Good my lord*, an order of words that emphasizes the epithet; gently here, less delicately elsewhere, e. g. V, II, 106.

7. *Shall you* : will I let you.

8. *Make it truster of* = make it trust.

9. *I know you are no truant.* How many princes, princes of the Renaissance even, would have brushed aside with such earnest vigour self-accusation no graver than this?

But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll[1] teach you to drink deep ere you depart.
Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student[2];
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon[3].
Ham. Thrift, thrift[4], Horatio! the funeral bak'd-meats[5]
Did coldly[6] furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest[7] foe in heaven
Or[8] ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.
Hor. O where, my lord?
Ham. In my mind's eye[9], Horatio.
Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly[10] king.
Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all.
I shall not look upon his like again[11].

1. *We* of this Most *Royal* Toping University of Elsinore.

2. *Fellow-student.* As to the significance of this form of address on Hamlet's lips cp. note on l. 173.

3. *Hard upon*, upon the heels of it, so to say (IV, VII, 164).

4. *Thrift*, economy. Hamlet repeats the word, the better to relish the bitter flavour of his own sarcasm.

5. *Bak'd meats* = meat-pastry.

6. *Coldly.* "Funerals invariably ended with an elaborate feast of cold food." (*Shakespeare's England*).

7. *Dearest* = direst. The word is not really the same as the "'dear" still in use, but was, it seems, largely confused with it, under the general notion of affecting intensely, closely (cp. note on III, II, 58); causing deep emotion, whether love or, for instance, hatred. —The feeling implied, as both natural and right, by the whole line casts additional light on the genuine quality of the speaker's reason for sparing Claudius at the close of III, III.

8. *Or*, meaning *before*, occurs by itself in V, II, 30 (and is found thus even later in the XVIIth cent.); "*ever*" is, of course, intensive. F has "*Ere* (not obsolete even now) *I had ever.*"

9. *In my mind's eye*, spoken without excitement (in Q^1, it is preceded by a "*Why*" of surprise at Horatio's question), and sufficient proof that "methinks I see my father" was purely meditative, *not* a confession of incipient hallucination.

10. *Goodly*: of good (here, of kingly) appearance.

11. Such a *man* (the American actor, Edwin Booth—second half of the XIXth century—emphasized the word, in contrast to the more official "*king*") that I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Ham. Saw? who[1]?
Hor. My lord, the king your father.
Ham. The king my father!
Hor. Season your admiration[2] for a while
With an attent[3] ear, till I may deliver[4],
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.
Ham. For God's love, let me hear.
Hor. Two nights together[5] had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast[6] and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd[7]. A figure like your father,
Armed at point[8] exactly, cap-a-pe[9],
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd[10]
Almost to jelly with the act[11] of fear,
Stand[12] dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch :
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

1. *Who?* : whom, as not seldom, even now, interrogatively, in conversational grammar.

2. *Season* = temper.—*Admiration* = astonishment,

3. *Attent* = attentive (not peculiar to Shakespeare).

4. *Deliver* = relate.

5. *Together*, successively.

6. *Dead*, I, 65.—*Vast* (Q[1] and two posthumous quartos), and "*wast*" (other quartos and F) = "*waste*" (later folios), are identical in etymology, and meaning. The preference of most modern editors is due to the occurrence in the *Tempest*, I, I, 238, of the phrase "vast of night" = desolate period of night (*O*).

7. *Encounter'd*, met, in a manner that gave them a shock.

8. *At point* (Q[2]; "*at all points*" F) = *Fr. à point*; in readiness.

9. *Cap-a-pe* (O. Fr. "*cap a pie*" = Mod. Fr. *de pied en cap*), pronounced (and sometimes spelt) "cap-a-pee" (*Capapea* in Qq.).

10. *Distill'd* = melted; a sense both older and later than Sh.'s time.

11. *With the act* = by the action. Fear made them shudder, as *jelly* quivers at a touch (Dowden).

12. *Stand*. The alternation of vivid present and past (202) is as correct, grammatically, as it is emotionally expressive.

Form[1] of the thing, each word made true and good,
The Apparition comes : I knew your father;
These hands are not more like[2].

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you[3] not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none : yet once methought
It lifted up it[4] head and did address[5]
Itself to motion, like as[6] it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Mar. } We do, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Mar. }
Ber. } Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

Mar. } My lord, from head to foot.
Ber. }

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O yes, my lord; he wore his beaver[7] up.

1. *Form.* The very slight unconnectedness (not real *dis*connectedness) betrays emotion, as does, in its way, the almost pleonastic phrase "*true and good*". Cp. "*each*," more insistent than "every."
2. *Like* = alike.
3. *You* (stressed) : to Horatio.
4. *It*, p. 5 n. 7.
5. *Address* = prepare.
6. *Like* would now be dispensed with.—*As* (before "*would*") = as if.
7. *Beaver* (Old French "*baviere*," chin-guard of a helmet) = face-guard, visor, which "could be pushed up entirely over the top" (Planche, in *N. E. D.*)

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?
Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Ham. Pale or red?
Hor. Nay, very pale.
Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?
Hor. Most constantly[1].
Ham. I would I had been there.
Hor. It would have much amaz'd[2] you.
Ham. Very like, very like[3]. Stay'd it long?
Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell[4] a [hundred.
Mar. } Longer, longer.
Ber. }
Hor. Not when I saw it.
Ham. His beard was grizzled? no?
Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable[5] silver'd.
Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.
Hor. I warrant[6] it will.
Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape[7]
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still[8];
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:

1. *Constantly*: steadily, fixedly.
2. *Amaz'd*: cp p. 136 n. 9.
3. *Like* = likely.—The repetition (cp. l. 180 and 224) here pensively puts aside an emotional presumption that might interfere with the methodical examination of evidence.
4. *Tell* = count.
5. *Sable* = black, in the language of heraldry. The whole description, "a *sable silver'd*," sounds indeed heraldic almost and thus befits a king.
6. *Warrant*, slashed down to *warn't in* Q[2]; cp. *Introd.* p. 1 n. 1.
7. *Gape*, as *Hell Mouth* often does, with tongue, fangs, and flames, in medieval *and* post-medieval art.
8. *Tenable*. *N. E. D.* has a XVIIth

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves[1], as mine to you : farewell.
[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well; 255
I doubt some foul play[2]; would the night were come!
Till then sit[3] still, my soul : foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them[4], to men's eyes[5].
[*Exit.*

Scene III[6]. *A room in Polonius's house.*

Enter Laertes *and* Ophelia.

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd : farewell :
And, sister, as[7] the winds give benefit[8]
And convoy[9] is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour[10], 5

century instance, in prose, of "*tenable*" = capable of being held, as in French. The sense here is "prove that you are able to hold it back."—*Still*, p. 11 n. 10.

1. *Loves* (cp. I, I, 173) he had used before; and what he says he means.

2. *Doubt* = suspect.—*Foul*, the opposite of "fair."

3. *Sit*, remain.

4. *Will*, here the auxiliary of maxims, expressing what will happen, as it has always happened, because it is in the nature of things. —*O'erwhelm* : should overwhelm (=cover them over with its mass).

5. The proverbial character of the utterance would suffice to explain its rhymed form, even if it did not wind up the speech and in fact the whole scene. Even at the cost of clearness (e. g. II, I, 118-8), the device appears to have preserved some of its attraction (could it be convenience only?) for the author of *Hamlet*.

6. *Scene III* comes as a relief after the tragic tension of its two predecessors; but Coleridge pointed out how skilfully it is, at the same time, interwoven with the main action of the drama. "You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of stop." (*Notes.*) Nor, in spite of what some good critics have written, does the presentation of any character in it seem irreconcilable with what we shall find later.

7. *As* = according as; Fr. *selon que*.

8. *Give benefit* (with "benefit" = favour) = prove favourable.

9. *Convoy* : means of conveyance.

10. *The trifling of his favour* the attentions that he bestows on you, and which are mere trifling.

Hold it a fashion[1] and a toy in blood[2],
A violet in the youth of primy[3] nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet[4], not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of[5] a minute,
No more.
Oph. No more but[6] so?
Laer. Think it no more :
For nature crescent[7] does not grow alone
In thews[8] and bulk, but, as this temple[9] waxes,
The inward service[10] of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel[11] doth besmirch
The virtue of his will : but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth :
He may not, as unvalued[12] persons do,
Carve for himself[13], for on his choice depends
The safety[14] and health of this whole state;

1. *Fashion*, passing mode. What well-born youth but must have a mistress to sigh to?

2. *Toy in blood* = idle caprice of the blood.

3. *Primy* (Sh.) = in its prime = in XVIth century French, "*en sa prime, en sa prime saison*".

4. *Forward*, early.—*Sweet*, to which the sympathetic emphasis and the slight consequent pause give the prosodic value of a disyllable.

5. *Pleasure and suppliance of* = what can supply pleasant pastime for.

6. *But*; cp. sc. I. l. 108.

7. *Crescent*, when it is growing. The fact that the word is usually associated with the moon gives it finer dignity.—*Alone*, only.

8. *Thews*, physical vigour.

9. *Temple* of the divine in man. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (*I Corinthians*, III, 16)—For the moment, it seems as if the speaker was not so much the young courtier as his "myriad-minded'" creator, anticipating Milton almost. Cp. the weightiness of 17-28, in their kind, and p. 141 n. 10.

10. *Service* : probably suggested by "*temple.*"

11. *Cautel* = crafty deceitfulness, as in a song of Marot's :

"*Qui veut entrer en grâce*
Des dames bien avant,
En cautelle et fallace
Faut estre bien sçavant"

12. *Unvalued* : to whom no value is attached.

13. *Carve*, cut up meat at table, help or serve; by a metaphor not peculiar to Shakespeare, "*carve for himself*" = help himself (here, to a wife) as he pleases.

14. *Safety*, trisyllabic here, it seems (contrast e. g. l. 43), as in Spenser's archaistic *Faerie Queene*, II, XIII, 17. F. has *sanctity* (= invi-

And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body[1]
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular[2] act and place
May give his saying deed[3]; which is no further
Than the main[4] voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent[5] ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd[6] importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection[7],
Out of the shot and danger of desire[8].
The chariest maid is prodigal enough[9],
If she unmask her beauty to the moon[10] :
Virtue itself[11] scapes not calumnious strokes :
The canker galls[12] the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons[13] be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth

olability? Theobald (p. 164 n. 8) conjectured *sanity*. For *sanity and health* (i. e. welfare), cp. p. 70 n. 9.

1. Enclosed within limits set by *the voice*, the expressed desire, and *yielding* (i. e. acquiescence) of that *body* politic (i. e. state).

2. *Particular*, peculiar to him as a Prince.

3. *Give his saying deed* : carry out his words in action.

4. *Main*, general.

5. *Credent* (with first *e* alphabetical), another Latin word (cp. " *crescent* " before, and " *infant* " in l. 39) of fine quality = believing. —*List* = listen to (slow and heavy, however, in comparison).

6. *Unmaster'd* : unbridled, unchecked (some understand " by himself, " the finer sense; others, " by you " simply; cp. p. 9 n. 12).

7. Do not go so far as your affection would lead you.

8. Beyond the range of the dangerous shot (i. e. shafts) of desire.

9. *Chariest*, most *careful* and circumspect, least " *prodigal* " of her beauty.

10. *The moon* and her " chaste beams " (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, 1, 162), in the secrecy of night.

11. *Virtue itself*, which it is so difficult to preserve (the real point of the speech, though veiled for the moment)—*Scapes*; " scape " for " escape " is not rare, even in prosé, in the XVIIth century.

12. *Canker*, canker-worm. Milton echoed many an Elizabethan, when, in *Lycidas* l. 45, he wrote : " As killing as the canker to the rose. "—*Galls*, frets and injures.

13. *Buttons* = buds.

Contagious blastments[1] are most imminent[2].
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear :
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near[3].
Oph. I shall the effect[4] of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to[5] my heart. But, good my brother,[6]
Do not, as some ungracious pastors[7] do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine[8],
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads[9],
And recks not his own rede[10].
Laer. O, fear me[11] not.
I stay too long : but here my father comes[12].

1. *Contagious blastments* (a rare word) = blastings (i. e. witherings, as if caused by some malignant blast or breath) of infectious origin and nature.

2. *Imminent*, to be feared, as in the air.

3. Cp. note to sc. II, 257-8, especially as regards the tightness of grammatical structure.—*To* = against, as in sc. II, 101.—*Near*, to tempt it to rebel thus.

4. *The effect* intended, the essential tenour; cp. V, II, 37.

5. *As watchman to*, a nimbly metaphorical way of saying "to watch over".

6. *Good my brother.* The repetition of "good" and the whole turn of the phrase would assist us, if need were, to realise the tone, probably that of more than one lectured sister to some charitably and edifyingly lecturing brother. Gentle as she is, and of comparatively few words, Ophelia is no fool.

7. *Ungracious* = graceless; French "*non touchés eux-mêmes de la grâce*". Contrast "gracious" in l. 164 of the preceding scene.—*Pastors*, shepherds of souls.

8. *Whiles* = whilst, which F has. —*Puff'd*, inflated; *reckless*, rashly (almost defiantly) careless.

9. *Himself.* The transition to the singular (which Laertes' sister really had in her mind all the time) was *explicitly* made in the preceding comparison.—*The primrose path* : "the primrose way *to the everlasting bonfire*," i. e. Hell-fire, in the phrase of Macbeth's porter (II, III).—*Dalliance* (O. Fr. "*dallier*," to pass the time in chatting) early came to mean flirtation, amorous (and even, as here, wanton) toying. Cp. the French "*conter fleurettes*". —*Treads* expresses more decision than "walks" would have done. Cp. note on "reckless" I. 49.

10. *Recks not his own rede* = heeds not his own advice. The alliteration between verb and noun and the perceptibly archaic quality, even then, of the latter ("*reck*" itself never was so common as some of its synonyms) give the phrase a proverbial ring, not unlike that of Laertes' own most wise conclusion.

11. *Me* (stressed) = as regards me.

12. Laertes, caring little for the part of the lectured one, remembers that he *must* go, when "his" father appears—a little troublesomely (though the courtly son takes it with graceful, and no doubt sufficiently sincere, dutifulness).

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave[1].
Pol. Yet[2] here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder[3] of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee[4]!
And these few[5] precepts in thy memory
Look thou character[6]. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd[7] thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar[8].
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried[9],
Grapple[10] them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull[11] thy palm with entertainment

1. Generally construed as if "*smiles*" and "*upon*" went together; in which case the meaning should be simply "favours." G. Macdonald however (ed. of *Hamlet*, 1885) understands: "a second leave-taking is a happy chance; the chance, because it is happy, smiles," as if there were a comma after the verb; which would not only divide the line more naturally, it seems, and pleasingly, but yield finer sense also.

2. *Yet* = still. For the scansion cp. note on sc. II, 140.

3. *Sits*. Cp. III, IV, 112. "To know which way the wind sits" was still currently used in the literal sense (as it now is figuratively) long after Shakespeare.—*Shoulder*; the swelling sail being like the shoulder, with swelling muscles, of a horse, for instance, having a boat in tow.

4. *Stay'd*: waited.—*There*, with a detaining gesture, from the heart; and the scolding "*you*" will soften into "*thee*."

5. *Few*. They will actually take up more than twenty lines; which, after the first words of the speech, well may in itself raise a smile, not wholly unsympathetic. Cp. part of the quotation from the edifying Lyly himself, in the note on l. 64.

6. *Look* = see, take care, that.—*Character* (here, as often then, accented on the second) = inscribe (subjunctive, expressing purpose).

7. *Unproportion'd*, not proportioned to the occasion.

8. *Vulgar* = common to all: "be easy in your manners, but do not make yourself cheap" (Dowden).

9. *Their adoption* = the choice thou hast made of them; *tried*, put to the proof; the construction is absolute (cp. Latin ablative absolute).

10. *Grapple*; more energetically insistent than "clasp", for example

11. *Dull*, make callous (cp. "the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense," V, I, 69-70), insensitive to differences between man and man, that easily escape notice but are all-important; for "every one that shaketh thee by the hand is not joined to thee in heart," as Euphues warned his friend Philautus (then, unfortunately, "one half sick and somewhat sleepy") before they landed in England

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade[1]. Beware
Of entrance to[2] a quarrel, but being in,
Bear it that the opposed[3] may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice :
Take each man's censure[4], but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit[5] as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy[6]; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they[7] in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief[8] in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend[9],

(John Lyly, *Euphues and his England*, 1580).

1. *Unfledg'd* : unfurnished with feathers, and so not "tried" (cp. 62) in the flight of friendship yet.—*Comrade* could still then (and later) be accented on the last.

2. *To* = into.

3. *Bear it that* = carry it on (cp. IV, III, 7) so that: the *opposed* = the opponent. "They never fight without provoking, and once provoked they never cease," Lyly had, with patriotic pride, already written of the English (*ibid.*).

4. *Censure* = opinion.

5. *Costly thy habit*, more emphatic, as well as concise, than "let thy habit (i. e. dress) be as costly."

6. *Express'd in fancy* = made to stand out, as it were, and to strike the eye by fancifulness (cp. Osric's phrase, "very dear to fancy," V, II, 152). In modern dressmaker's phrase, let it be "quiet," so that only the most "*select*" shall appreciate the taste of it and divine the "*cost.*" This bit of advice, one may note, shows more worldly insight into such matters than the naively antithetic recommendation made to Euphues by an old gentleman in Naples, Eubulus : "Let thy attire be comely, but not costly." (*Euphues. The Anatomy of Wit*, 1579).

7. *They* : those.

8. *Of a* (which *Sh. may* have meant to cross out, but which all older editions have), suppressed by Rowe, makes sense only if "*chief*" ("*cheff*" in F$_3$), followed by a comma in Q^2 = excellence (exceptionally). Reading "*often*" (J. D. Wilson), with "*chief*" = chiefly, weakens the argument. "*Choice*," for "chief," is a mere guess.—As for *generous*, the context shows that it cannot mean only (or even chiefly) liberal with their money. Much rather, the sense is "showing excellence of birth and spirit" (Lat. *generosus*; Fr. *généreux*). When young Robert Cecil was about to set out on his travels, his father, Queen Elizabeth's famous Lord High Treasurer, Burleigh, wrote down for him precepts (ten in number, in conscious reminiscence of the Decalogue); the eighth begins with "Towards superiors be humble, yet *generous*." (Furness, II).

9. Lending often makes us lose not only the money but the friend to whom it was lent. Lord Bur-

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry[1].
This above all : to thine own self be true[2],
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee[3]!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go; your servants tend[4].

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Pol. What is it, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord [Hamlet[5].

Pol. Marry, well bethought[6] :
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late[7]
Given private time[8] to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous[9] :
If it be so—as so 'tis put on me[10],

leigh's fifth commandment dealt with the question of lending and borrowing in the same spirit, though less radically and quite unpicturesquely.

1. *Husbandry* : thrift, economy.

2. *True* : loyal, faithful.—On which, and the whole speech, see Appendix *B*.

3. "May my blessing make this advice come to maturity in thee and bear fruit in season!" Godefroi (*Dict. Ancienne Langue Française du IX^e^ au XVI^e^ siècle*) has "*saisonner*, mettre à point." (Cp. III, II, 196, and III, 86).

4. *Tend* : "attend," V, II, 183, = wait in readiness. Neither the meaning nor the abbreviation was then uncommon.

5. *So please you* = may it so please you.—The alarmed, intentionally colourless, answer is in broken metre; cp. and contrast the outburst in 90.

6. In the son the father, with loud approval, recognises himself,—*Marry*, originally an oath by the name of the Virgin Mary, had then become only a familiar, intensive exclamation (cp. p. 39 n. 9).—*Bethought* = thought of; Fr. "*avisé*."

7. *Tis told me* (Cp. "'tis put on me" l. 94); by whom, Polonius is careful not to tell. Cp. his instructions in II, I.—*Of late*, particularly since he lost his father, perhaps.

8. *Private time* : time, in private.

9. *Your audience* : Fr. *vos audiences*; *most*, in ironic approval; *free*, liberal, which *bounteous* sonorously emphasizes.

10. *So*, rather ponderously insistent.—*Put on* = impressed on,

And that in way of caution—I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself[1] so clearly
As it behoves[2] my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth[3].
Oph. He hath, my lord[4], of late made many tenders[5]
Of his affection to me[6].
Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green[7] girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance[8].
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?
Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
Pol. Marry[9], I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,
That you have taken these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling[10]. Tender[11] yourself more dearly;
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase[12],
Running[13] it thus—you'll tender me a fool[14].
Oph. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honourable fashion.
Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to[15].

1. *Yourself*: who you are ("my daughter," l. 97) and what your conduct should be ("your honour" *ibid.*).

2. *Behoves* (with *o* as in "move" and "prove") = befits, becomes.

3. The heavy, scolding voice here becomes more loudly threatening, as he advances upon her. Cp. p. 40 n. 4.

4. *My lord.* A father was such, in those days, even to a son (l. 81,); more overwhelmingly still to a daughter.

5. *Tenders*, offers made in due form. Ophelia, in her desire to impress this on her father, lights on a word belonging chiefly to the legal vocabulary; hence Polonius's mocking "as you call them" l. 103.

6. The line is incomplete, imperiously interrupted, as it were. Cp. l. 111.

7. *Green*, not matured by experience of the world.

8. *Unsifted*, untried.—*Circumstance* = circumstances.

9. *Marry*, a pet word of his. II, i.

10. *That* = in this that.—*Sterling*, to be accepted at their nominal value.

11. *Tender* = be tenderly solicitous about. Cp. IV, iii, 40.

12. *To crack the wind of* = "*rendre poussif*" (D.); "wind" meaning "breath".—*A phrase*, mode of expression, term.

13. *Running*; an emendation generally accepted now, as aptly continuing the metaphor in l. 108 ("*running it*" = forcing it to run), but not thought of (by Collier) till the middle of last century. Q^2 has "*wrong*" (Pope conjectured, metrically, "wronging"); F., "*roaming*."

14. *Tender... fool*: offer me a fool in your person.

15. *Go to* (originally = go about your work; cp. Fr. "*allons donc!*"), expressive, here, of derisive incredulity.

Oph. And hath given countenance[1] to his speech, [my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.[2] I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal[3] the soul
Lends the tongue vows : these blazes, daughter[4],
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both[5]
Even in their promise, as it is a-making[6],
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be something scanter[7] of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate[8]
Than a command to parley[9]. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in[10] him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he[11] walk
Than may be given you : in few[12], Ophelia.
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers[13],
Not of that dye which their investments[14] show,
But mere implorators[15] of unholy suits,

1. *Countenance* : support, here in the sense of confirmation.

2. *Springes*, snares, especially for birds. The title of a book of 1613 is " *Laquei Ridiculosi or Springes to catch Woodcocks* "; Fr. *bécasses*, " oiseau qui ne sait éviter aucun piège, " as Buffon notes; cp. V, II, 306.—*I*, emphatic.

3. *Prodigal*. Adjectives were then very freely used as adverbs; and most naturally here,

4. *Blazes*, of the kind called in French *feux de paille*.—The verse is syllabically incomplete. But this is no family idyll; one may easily imagine a derisive half bark lengthening " vows " perceptibly; and a certain hollowness is natural in the second half of the line.

5. *Extinct in both* : whose light and heat are both extinguished.

6. At the very time when the promise they express is *a-making* = in the act of making (i. e. being made).

7. *Something*, Q^2 (adverbially cp. sc. II, 141.) = " somewhat, " F; *scanter* = " charier, " less " prodigal " (l. 36).

8. *Entreatments* = " conversations, interviews " (*N. E. D.* which gives not exactly similar, but analogous, instances).—*Rate*, price.

9. *Parley* : hold a parley, as with an enemy, for the discussion of terms of surrender, for example.

10. *In* = concerning. — *Young*; cp. 6-10 and Appendix *K*.

11. *He*, being a young *man*.

12. *You*, a girl.—*In few* words.

13. *Brokers*, go-betweens, intermediaries in illicit love-affairs.

14. *Investments* (Sh.), " referring, I think, to the white vestments of a priest, " which " figure innocence ", *2. Henry IV*, IV, I, 45 (Verity, whose interpretation is endorsed by *N. E. D.*).

15. *Implorators*. *N. E. D.* gives no other instance of this more sonorous synonym of " implorers. "

Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds[1],
The better to beguile. This is for all[2].
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment leisure[3]
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to it, I charge you : come your ways[4].
Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The platform.*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold[5].
Hor. It is a nipping and an eager[6] air.
Ham. What hour now?
Hor. I think it lacks of twelve[7].
Mar. No, it is struck.
Hor. Indeed? I heard it not. It then draws near the season[8]
Wherein the Spirit held his wont[9] to walk.
[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within*[10].
What does this mean, my lord?
Ham. The king doth wake[11] to-night and takes his rouse[12],

1. *Bonds*, given by all the old editions, can best be understood, it seems, as an allusion to the "bonds" of "holy matrimony." *Breathing* must then be taken a little laxly.

2. *This ... all* : this will do *for* (cp. p. 221. n. 5) all that I might say; in sum.

3. *Slander* = bring scandal (cp. l. 38) on; a meaning not peculiar to Shakespeare.—*Moment* = moment's (cp. p. 50 n. 6).

4. *Come your ways* (still common, *Clarendon*), come the way you have to come, come along. The *s* apparently marks an adverbial genitive, not the plural.

5. *Shrewdly* : with intense sharpness.—*It is very cold*; spoken, it seems, with a shiver almost. Cp. of course sc. I, ll. 7-8.

6. *Eager*, sharp (Fr. "*aigre*;" from Lat. "*acer*").

7. *Lacks of* = lacks something of, is not quite.

8. *Season* = time.

9. *Held his wont*, more solemn than "was wont."

10. *Within*, behind the stage.

11. *Wake* (cp. French "*réveillonner*) : hold a night-revel.

12. *Takes his rouse* (p. 24 n. 3) = carouses.

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels[1];
And, as he drains[2] his draughts of Rhenish[3] down,
The kettle-drum[4] and trumpet thus bray out[5]
The triumph of his pledge[6].
Hor. Is it a custom[7]?
Ham. Ay, marry, is it[8]:
But, to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born[9], it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance[10].
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations[11]:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition[12]; and indeed it[13] takes

1. *Keeps wassail*: drinks healths (cp. sc. II, 125-128); holds a drinking-bout.—*Swaggering*, blusteringly defiant.—*Upspring reels*: see Appendix *C*.

2. *Drains*. Cp. Montaigne (*Essais*, II, II, *De l'Yvrognerie* § 4), speaking of the drinking habits of the Germans: "*leur fin c'est.... avaller, plus que gouster.*

3. *Rhenish* (with "e" short; from "Rhêne" = Rhine) wine.

4. *Kettle-drum* (Fr. "*timbale*"), a touch of still more definite local colour, as this was thought to be a distinctively Danish instrument. Cp. latter part of stage-direction after III, II, 86.

5. *Bray out*: sound loudly and harshly.

6. *The.... pledge*: his triumphant achievement, having drunk one health more. After 35 such "triumphs," Christian IV (cp. note on sc. II, 127) had to be carried away, at last, in his chair of state

7. *Is it a custom*? The question and l. 14-15 imply that Horatio is not "*native here*"; and yet, at the end of the play, he will speak of himself as, by birth, "*a Dane.*" Mr. Verity hesitatingly suggests that some distinction between different parts of Denmark may be intended. Or did Shakespeare think, *here*, of Horatio only as a visitor from Wittenberg?

8. *Is it* has more vivacity than "it is," of course, or the comparatively harsh "'tis." Cf. e. g. V I, 22.

9. *To the manner born*: accustomed to this habit from birth.

10. *Honour'd*, accompanied with honour, bringing honour. Breaking it deserves more honour than observing it.

11. *Traduc'd*, misrepresented, calumniated.—*Tax'd*, blamed, as in French.—*Of* = by.

12. *Clepe* (still used, even in prose, then) = call.—*Drunkards*. The Danes are mentioned as mighty drinkers, though *not* they alone, in *Othello*, II, III.—*With swinish phrase*, by speaking of us as of swine (which the Danish name Sweyn may have suggested, *Clar.*) —*Our addition* = the qualification *added* when we Danes are mentioned, the "good name" that expresses our good fame.

13. *It*, this national habit.

From our achievements, though perform'd at height[1],
The pith[2] and marrow of our attribute[3].
So, oft it chances in particular men[4],
That for some vicious mole of nature[5] in them,
As, in their birth — wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his[6] origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion[7],
Oft breaking down the pales and forts[8] of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens[9]
The form of plausive[10] manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star[11],—
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace[12],
As infinite as man may undergo[13]—

1. *Perform'd at height* = high exploits indeed.

2. *The pith*, regarded as the seat of vegetal vigour, as the "*marrow*" is of animal.

3. *Our attribute* = what is attributed to us, our credit or favourable reputation.

4. Hamlet here, as Coleridge notes, "runs off from the particular to the universal," and, in more senses than one, loses himself in it (cp. note on V, II, 7).

5. *Vicious mole of nature*, vice that is only a natural spot or small blemish.

6. *His*, I, I, 37.

7. *O'ergrowth*, excessive development.—*Complexion* (metrically quadrisyllabic), moral temperament as well as physical.

8. *The pales and forts* : both the weaker, and the more elaborate and strongest, defences.

9. *O'erleavens*, leavens "too much" (as regards the reduplication cp. notes on *chiefest*, sc. II, 117, Act. II, I, 11, and II, 122), so that it *deforms*.

10. *Plausive*; rare, even then, for "plausible" in the once usual acceptation of "deserving and drawing public applause."

11. *Being* : which is. The participial form seems to have been, almost mechanically, suggested by *carrying*, which begins the line before.—*Nature's livery* resumes the idea in l. 24-28.—*Fortune's star*, "*effet de la fortune et, partant, d'une étoile*" (*D.*). But apparently, as Dowden suggested, *star* might mean also (though *N. E. D.* does not record it) a mark on the skin (actually a *mole* in *Cymbeline*, V, v, 364); which would more exactly continue the image in *stamp* and *livery*.

12. Let their virtues, on the other hand, be as pure as heavenly grace can make them.—Grammatically, 33-34 stand by themselves, apart (if one accepts the Clarendon Press punctuation, as has been done here). Q^2 (F^1 omits from l. 17 to *Enter Ghost*) limits its stopping to commas after 32, 33, and 34, impartially (cp. Introd. p. XXI, n. 1).

13. *Undergo*, receive from above and support, for virtues are not mere feathers in one's cap,—*May*: cp. p. 6 n. 8, but also l. 51,

Shall, in the general censure, take corruption[1]
From that particular[2] fault : the dram of eale[3]
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt[4]
To his own scandal[5].

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!
Ham. Angels and Ministers of grace defend[6] us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,[7] 40

1. *Shall*, expressing consequence. —*The general censure*= either public opinion, " *vox populi* " (which the Prince of Denmark, at any rate, is not inclined to reverence; cp. II, II, 361-3, and p. 118 ll. 2-5), or the *ensemble* judgment passed on a man. —*Take corruption*=" *perdre leur bonne odeur* " (D.).

2. *Particular*, opposed (in the second interpretation given of " the general censure ") to " general. "

3. *Dram*, strictly the eighth part of an ounce; hence, indefinitely, a minute quantity.—*Eale*, obviously a misprint, *may* stand for *e'il* i. e. *evil*. In II, II, 600 Q^2 has " *deale* " twice for *devil* or *de'il*; cp. note there.

4. *Of a doubt*. The emendations offered for this and for " *eale* " (Q^2 and Q^3, a year later, are the only real authorities for ll. 17-38, which occur neither in Q^1 nor in F) occupied already half a dozen pages of very small print in Furness. Some verb seems needed, to which " *doth* " shall be the auxiliary; and " *dout*, " for example (= do out, extinguish), now dialectal, has been proposed (F actually makes the confusion in IV, VII, 192). As regards *of a*, cp. p. 37 n. 8.—*Oft* has occurred twice already (l. 23 and 28); but there is nothing in the elaborately meditative character of the speech to make further repetition unlikely, though *dout*, rather awkward in itself, gains nothing by the qualification. —What Sh. did write, we shall never know, though, by the light of the preceding lines, the general meaning is clear.

5. *His* ,apparently = its (p. 5 n. 7), referring to " *substance*. "—*Scandal*, in the sense of damage to reputation.

6. *Defend*, not the imperative, as no comma precedes, but the optative = " may... defend. "—*Us*, unstressed (prosodically hypermetric), whispered in awe.

7. *Be thou*, whether thou be (subjunctive).—*Spirit*; p. 12 n. 8. —*Health* (cp. " *saving health* " = salvation, *Collect or Prayer for all conditions of Men*, in the *Book of Common Prayer*) may mean either healed (= saved), contrasting with " damn'd, " or healing (cp. bringing " airs from heaven; " l. 41, and " charitable " l. 42), or, better, both (cp. p. 14 n. 5).—*Goblin*, " wicked spirit "—The alternative thus set forth from the first should not be forgotten in appraising the sincerity of the doubts expressed at the end of Act II; cp. in this very scene ll. 62-74. In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus, facing Caesar's ghost, had questioned :

Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil? (IV, III, 279).

Bring[1] with thee airs from heaven or blasts[2] from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape[3]
That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, Father, Royal Dane[4] : O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death[5],
Have burst their cerements[6]; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd[7],
Hath oped[8] his ponderous and[9] marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may[10] this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete[11] steel
Revisits[12] thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature[13]

1. *Bring* = whether thou bring (subjunctive).

2. *Blasts*; cp. III, II, 373-4.

3. *Questionable* lending itself to question. *Shape*, one may note, still means costume, in the technical language of the stage, and was then applied to the whole *make up*.

4. *Royal Dane* is, to modern feeling, rather an anticlimax after "*father*"; and the suggestion (made by an anonymous correspondent in the *St. James's Chronicle* for Oct. 15th 1761) that these words should be connected with the *latter* part of the line has been followed by Furness among others. Cp. however, even if a regular gradation is intended, V. II, 64; and observe that "*Royal Dane*" = kingly king of Denmark; contrast III, IV, 92-106.

5. *Canoniz'd* (a verb always accented on the second by Sh.) = consecrated (it seems) into rest according to the rule (cp. p. 24 n. 8) of the Church.—*Hearsed* (Q^2 and F^1 agree with Q^1 in eliding the *e* of "canonized" and consequently making *hearsed* disyllabic) = coffined (the noun always means coffin in Sh.), perhaps, here, entombed; cp. "'inurn'd," 49.

6. *Cerements* (possibly Shakespearean), cereclothes, grave-clothes.

7. *Inurn'd*, an emendation of F's *enurn'd*, is a finer, classical, synonym of "entombed," than the Quartos' "*interr'd.*"

8. *Op'd*, from "ope," an old abbreviated form of "open."

9. *And*, insistent.

10. *May* : can (cp. "might" in I, I, 56), with a suggestion of uncertainty *perhaps*.

11. *Complete*, one of the disyllabic adjectives then (and, in verse, much later) of variable accentuation. The foreseen occurrence of a stressed monosyllable immediately after would, in such cases, still *tend* to throw the accent back. — As for the full armour, its suitability to the place and the rumour of war needs no pointing out (cp. sc. I, 110-1). Contrast p. 154 n. 8; p. 157 n. 3.

12. *Revisits*. "In verbs ending with *t*, *test* final, in the 2d person singular, often becomes *ts* for euphony" (Abbott § 340).

13. *We*. "The conjunction seems

So horridly to shake our disposition[1] 55
With thoughts beyond the reaches[2] of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?
[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment[3] did desire
To[4] you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action[5] 60
It waves you to a more removed ground[6] :
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should[7] be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee[8]; 65
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth[9] again : I'll follow it.

Hor What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff[10] 70
That beetles[11] o'er his base into the sea,

to be regarded as introducing a new sentence, instead of connecting one clause with another. Hence the pronoun is put in the nominative; and a verb is, perhaps, to be supplied from the context. " (Abbott § 216). The irregularity in syntax is, to some extent, expressive of the speaker's perturbation.—*Fools of nature,* made by nature to behave like fools; whether "*nature* " means *our* mortal nature or, more forcibly, Nature, the "*things in heaven and earth* " (sc. V, 166).

1. *Our disposition,* the normal condition " of our souls. "

2. *Reaches*; cp. p. 14 n. 9.

3. *Impartment* (not peculiar to, but not recorded before, Sh.), a rare and solemn synonym of communication.

4. *To,* to make to.

5. *Action* = gesture; cp. I, II, 84 n. —*Courteous*; cp. what Ophelia will say of the son, in III, I, 151.

6. *Waves,* beckons with a waving gesture; *to,* to go with it to.—*Removed* = remote, retired.

7. *Should,* in your opinion.

8. *Set,* value.—*Fee* = worth.

9. *Forth,* to go away with it.

10. *Cliff.* The Elsinore of geographers has none; but Shakespeare knew that *his* Elsinore stood formidably near one, of gloomy, maddening height. Cp. IV, I, 29.

11. *Beetles,* projects menacingly. This verb seems to have been formed by Shakespeare (*N. E. D.*) from such phrases as " *beetle-browed,* " aptly rendered by " *sourcilleux* " in Cotgrave's *Dictionary* (1611).

And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason[1]
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation[2],
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to[3] the sea
And hears it roar beneath.
Ham. It waves me still[4].
Go on; I'll follow thee.
Mar. You shall not[5] go, my lord.
Ham. Hold off your hands.
Hor. Be rul'd; you shall not go.
Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty[6] artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve[7].
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me[8]:
I say, away[9]! Go on; I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*
Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination[10].

1. *Deprive* = either dispossess or take away (then not unexpected meanings) *your sovereignty of reason* = the sovereignty of your reason, its sovereign control over your mind.

2. *Toys* = idle fancies (cp. sc. III, 6).—*Desperation*, active, here suicidal, despair.—Horatio's warning would have had the emphatic support of Shakespeare's future sovereign, James VI of Scotland and I of England, author of a *Daemonology* (1579).

3. *To*, in the direction of.

4. Neither Q^1 nor F has these three and a half lines, which, still more definitely than the rest, parallel the passage in a slightly later tragedy, *King Lear*, where the blind Gloucester is tempted to put an end to his sufferings by throwing himself down what has been described to him as an even more murderously gigantic height, a prodigiously magnified "Dover Cliff."

5. *You shall not.* Marcellus and Horatio lay hold of Hamlet.

6. *Each petty*, even the pettiest.

7. *Hardy*, capable of endurance.—*Nemean* (then often accented, as here, on the first), that infested the valley of Nemea, near Argos, till Hercules, finding him invulnerable to both arrows and club, had to strangle him.—*Nerve* (collective) = sinews, muscles.

8. *Make a ghost*; no idle jest (cp. p. 26 n. 2)—*Lets* = hinders.

9. *Away*, take your hands away.

10. *Imagination*, cp. I. 56.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.
Hor. Have[1] after. To what issue will this come?
Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
Hor. Heaven will direct it[2].
Mar. Nay, let's follow him[3]. 91
[*Exeunt.*

Scene V. *Another part of the platform*[4].

Enter Ghost *and* Hamlet.

Ham. Whither[5] wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.
Ghost. Mark me.
Ham. I will.
Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
Ham. Alas, poor ghost!
Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing 5
To what I shall unfold.
Ham. Speak; I am bound[6] to hear.
Ghost. So art thou[7] to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
Ham. What?

1. *Have after* (cp. *get*, in the sense of "go", and V, II, 302) = I will (or, here, because of 88, let us) follow.

2. *It*, the issue (*Clar.*); but still more indefinite perhaps. For the sentiment, cp. V, II. 12.

3. *Nay*, a milder (because a less deliberate) equivalent of some such phrase as "let us not leave it wholly to heaven".

4. *Platform.* Against this localisation (not found explicitly before the second quarter of the XVIIIth century) Hamlet's "*I'll go no further*" (l. 1) and the time apparently supposed to elapse before his friends also reach this "*more removed ground*" have been, not unreasonably, adduced. Where exactly the portentous revelation took place, Sh.'s audience, in fact, would not care. Cp. p. 57 n. 7.

5. *Whither* (for which F has "where,"), scanned by strict metrists as monosyllabic.

6. *Bound*, prepared (Middle English "boun," from a Scandinavian verb).

7. *So art thou* bound i. e. *obliged*. In true English Renaissance fashion the Ghost grimly plays on the word just used by Hamlet.

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit[1],
Doom'd for a certain term to walk[2] the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature[3]
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid[4]
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up[5] thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres[6],
Thy knotted and combined locks to[7] part,
And each particular hair to stand an end[8],
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine[9]:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood[10]. List, list, O, list[11]!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Ham. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder!

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best[12] it is;
But this, most foul, strange, and unnatural.

1. *I... spirit.* Words equivalent, in substance, to a complete metrical line, just as Hamlet's "*What?*" could stand by itself. Cp. e. g. I. 41.

2. *Walk.* Cp. I, 138.

3. *The foul crimes done* (cp. l. 76, and III, III, 81) by one that Hamlet calls "*so excellent a King*" (II, 139), and whom he describes as he does, both in that passage and in III IV, 55-62 (not to mention I, II, 187-188), may be a survival from the old story of a barbarous age, through the crude pre-Shakespearean tragedy. The idea, on the other hand, that evil is rife in the hearts of all men, so that the best need "*purging*" with fire, will find unforgettable expression in such passages as Hamlet's "*Get thee to a nunnery*" speech (III, I, 121 ff.) and his retort to Polonius in II, II, 527-8.—*My days of nature*, the days of my life in this world; cp. I, II, 73.

4. *But that I am forbid*, were it not that I am forbidden.

5. *Harrow up*; cp. I, 44.

6. *Spheres*, orbits.

7. *To* emphasizes the construction, as subordinate clause is added to subordinate clause.

8. *An end* (still used dialectally) = on end (which Q^2 has).

9. *Fretful*, irritable.—*Porpentine*, then a common variant of "porcupine." The epithet in Q^2 is "*fearful*", apter perhaps but less vivid.

10. *Eternal blazon* = divulgation of eternity, revelation of the mysteries of eternal life.—*To*, made to; cp. p. 46 n. 4.

11. *List*; cp. sc. I, II, 30 n.

12. *In the best* = in the best case, at best.

Ham. Haste me to know it[1], that I, with wings as swift
As meditation[2], or the thoughts of love,
May sweep[3] to my revenge.
Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed[4]
That roots[5] itself in ease on Lethe wharf[6],
Wouldst thou not[7] stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard[8],
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process[9] of my death
Rankly[10] abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did[11] sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Ham. O my prophetic[12] soul!
My uncle!
Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate[13] beast,

1. *Haste me to know it* = make me speedily know it, hasten to make me know it.

2. *Meditation*, apparently : intense thought, apprehending its object with the winged undiverted swiftness of intuition.

3. *Sweep*, rush with undelaying, irresistible swiftness.—*Find thee apt*: see thou art impressed, moved, as I wish thee to be.

4. *Shouldst thou be* : Fr. " *il faudrait que tu fusses.* "—*Fat*, in accord with " dull. " Cp. e. g. Isaiah, ch. VI, v, 10, " Make the heart of this people fat..., lest they should understand with their hearts (p. 75 n. 3). "

5. *Roots* (for which F has " *rots*, " not so naturally construed with " *itself* ") contrasts with the idea of " stirring "in the next line and is the reading of Q^2, as of Q^1.

6. *Lethe wharf* (for the grammatical form, cp. p. 41 n. 3; II, II, 579) = the bank of Lethe. " a lake in Hell, which the Poets call the lake of forgetfulness. For *Lethe* signifieth forgetfulness. " (Gloss to Spenser's *Shepherds Calendar*, 1579).

7. *Wouldst thou not*, if thou wouldst not.

8. *Given out*, publicly, officially, reported.—*My orchard*; which would be both fruit-garden and pleasure-garden, no doubt, with shady walks and arbours, "the honest delight of one wearied with the works of his calling " (*A New Orchard*, 1618).

9. *Forged process*, fabricated account.

10. *Rankly*, most grossly; cp. I, II, 136; III, III, 36.

11. *Did*, for a " serpent " it *was*.

12. As having foreboded this (cp. sc. II, 256).

13. *Adulterate* (rare, but not special to Sh.) = adulterous. Lines 42-58 mark the extent (cp. p. 150 n. 4) of the Queen's guilt, before she married Claudius, in Sh. as in Belleforest, who added, however, that her second marriage

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
O wicked wit and gifts[1], that have the power
So to seduce! —won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous[2] Queen :
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that[3] dignity
That it went hand in hand even[4] with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline[5]
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine[6]!
But virtue, as it never will be moved[7],
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself[8] in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the[9] afternoon,
Upon my secure[10] hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon[11] in a vial,

" *donna à penser à plusieurs* (as it does to her son in Sh., III, IV, 29) *qu'elle pouvait avoir causé ce meurtre pour jouir librement de son adultère.* "

1. For the alliterative balancings, cp. p. 48 n. 7.

2. *Seeming virtuous* = seemingly (cp. p. 40 n. 3) virtuous (on which latter word " *most* " may bear).—*Will* has the meaning of " inclination ", with a suggestion (if not more) of the sense in III, IV, 88.

3. *That* : such, but more pointed.

4. *Even* (cp. I, I, 121) = exactly, fully.

5. *Decline*, " fall off " such an object for her love and sink " upon " such another (cp. III, IV, 66-7).

6. *To*; cp. I, II, 139-42, of which this is a ghostly echo.—*Those of mine*, those that were mine.

7. *Virtue, as it*, a grammatical construction that sets " virtue " in independent relief, as if on a rock, impregnable.—*Will* (slightly stressed), owing to its very nature (cp. p. 32 n. 4).

8. *Sate itself*, become satiated, feel satiety.

9. *Of the* = of an.—F.has, less rarely (cp. p. 7, n. 5), *in the*.

10. *Secure* (here accented on the first; cp. p. 45, n. 11), not suspecting danger, when I *fancied* myself safe.

11. *Hebenon*, the reading of the Folios, is not much less mysterious than the Quartos' " *hebona* " (cp. " *the juice of hebon*, " which figures as a deadly poison in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, III, IV, 99).

And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous[1] distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man[2]
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys[3] of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset[4]
And curd, like eager droppings[5] into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood[6] : so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about[7],
Most lazar-like[8], with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd[9] :
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin[10],
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled[11],

Ebony (one Elizabethan form of the word was "*heben*" = Latin "*hebenus*"; GK. ἔβενος; accusative : ἔβενον), is not known to have been considered as possessing such properties. Yew ("*hebenus*" too, sometimes, in medieval Latin) *may* be meant, since it was then thought poisonous, (as its leaves certainly are for animals).

1. *Leperous* (= leprous), whose effect is (like) leprosy; cp. "*lazar-like*" (72).—*Distilment* = produce of distillation;

2. *Blood of man*, more palpably indefinite (and so more emphatic), than "*the* blood of man" would be. Cp. "*heart of man*" (121).—*Holds*, more forcible too than "has."

3. *Gates*, places of entrance (for the blood). The word may have been suggested by the name of the "*vena portae*" (Fr. "*veine porte*") or "*gate-vein*" (cp. Onions), now "portal vein."—*Alleys*, covered passages (*N. E. D.*).

4. *Posset*, curdle (see next note) like a posset (a drink of hot milk curdled with various liquors).

5. *Curd*, form into curd, curdle, coagulate (= Fr. "*cailler*").—*Eager droppings*, drops of something eager (p. 41 n. 6), let fall.

6. *Thin*, contrasting with the thickness of curd.—*Wholesome* = healthy; cp. III, II, 245.

7. *Instant*, immediate; *tetter*, one of the words for Fr. *dartre* in Cotgrave's *Dict.* (1611).—*Bark'd about*, encased, as in a bark.

8. *Most lazar-like*, making me very much like a "lazar" (= leper).

9. *Dispatch'd* : deprived, a deviation from the more usual meaning for which Shakespeare's contemporaries were prepared.

10. *Even* (cp. e. g. I, I, 81).—Can *the blossoms of my sin* mean "the blossoms borne by *Sin* in me," the singular (which needs explaining) having, in the original sense of the epithet, a *radical* value, and the *blossoms* suggesting rather the various forms of enjoyed and rejoicing sin, the "imperfections" of I. 79, the "crimes broadblown" of III, III, 81?

11. *Unhousel'd* = without having had the Communion administered to me.—*Disappointed* (more suggest-

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head :
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible! 80
If thou hast nature[1] in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury[2] and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 85
Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee[3] well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin[4] to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire[5]. 90
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [*Exit*[6].

Ham. O all you host of heaven[7]! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell[8]? O, fie[9]! Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old[10].

ive of disorder and dismay than the more symmetrical "unappointed" would have been) = unequipped (cp. *appointment*, V, VI, 16) for the other world, unprepared for it by confession (the *reckoning* of l. 78), repentance, absolution, which is implied, communion, and extreme unction (*aneling*, of which one Elizabethan form was "anoiling").

1. *Nature* = natural feeling, as in sc. II, 5 and V, II, 244.

2. *Luxury*, always in Sh. = Fr. "*luxure.*"

3. *Thee*, I, I, 40.

4. *Matin*, for "morning," appears to have been a very uncommon word, at any time, in English, and may have been preferred, here, for this reason by Sh.

5. *Gins* = begins.—*Pale*, make pale (a transitive use not special to Sh.).—*Uneffectual* (a common form then), become of no (or of insufficient) effect.

6. *Exit*, no doubt through a trap, contrived, for such purposes, in the stage. The "cellarage" (151) under it appears, in fact, to have been technically known as "*hell*" (E. K. Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 1923). Cp. n. 8.

7. *Host of heaven*, army of the Angels of Heaven (to which Hamlet looks up).

8. *Shall* (stressed), expressing reluctance.—*Couple*, join to heaven and earth.—*Hell*, justified by the horror of 11-22, though the Ghost's "unreformed" theology makes his torments *purgatorial* (13).

9. *Fie!* (cp. II, 135) may express vehement repulsion at the foul deeds revealed, or (taken in connection with what follows; cp. II, 101 and II, II, 589) be a rebuke to himself. "He must not let himself feel; he has to live. (Bradley, *Shakespearian Tragedy*).

10. *Hold* together, do not burst. —*Instant.* I, III, 116.

But bear me stiffly up[1]. Remember thee[2]?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe[3]. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory[4]
I'll wipe away all trivial fond[5] records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past[6],
That youth and observation[7] copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter : yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman[8]!
O villain, villain, smiling, damn'd villain[9]!
My tables[10],—meet it is I set it down[11],
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark : [*Writing.*
So, uncle, there you are[12]. Now to my word[13];
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'
I have sworn it[14].

1. *Bear... up*, generally understood to mean that Hamlet had been kneeling, in awed reverence, had almost swooned in horror (whence the " *O, fie*! "), and now stands up.

2. *Remember thee?* Though the printers of F (and not they only) often used a question-mark after an exclamatory sentence, it has been retained here (and in l. 97), as more pathetically suggestive of a still imagined presence than the note of exclamation generally substituted.

3. *This globe*, this head, which he clasps in his hands.

4. *Yea*, emphatic.—*Table* = tablet (cp. n. 10). Lines 98-109, in Mr. Verity's phrase, " proclaim the student, " the man of note-books.

5. *Fond*, emphatically foolish (the commonest meaning then).

6. *Saws*, sayings, maxims.—*Forms* (shapes, images, left in the mind by experience) = imprints, impressions. Cp. *form and pressure*, III, II, 23.

7. *Youth and observation* : the observation of the young man that I am (or *was*, for such experience as Hamlet has just had may well count for years; cp. Appendix *K*).

8. The *woman's* part, his mother's (cp. II, 143-157), moves Hamlet to the very depths of him.—*Pernicious* = not simply fatal, but wickedly so.

9. Cp. II, II, 580-1.

10. *Tables* (cp. 98), writing-tablets, the Elizabethan equivalent of the modern note-book.

11. *Set it down* : should write it down, as well worth remembering.

12. *There you are* set down in your true colours.

13. *Word* (cp. *watch-word*), the word or, as in Q1, the " words ", by which I am to guide my conduct.

14. *I have sworn it*; spoken after having kissed the " tables " perhaps (Inglesby), as, in English courts of law, a (New) Testament is kissed, when an oath is taken.

Mar. } [*Within.*] My lord, my lord!
Hor. }
Mar. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet!
Hor. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him!
Ham. So be it[1]!
Hor. [*Within.*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!
Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come[2].

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS[3].

Mar. How is it[4], my noble lord?
Hor. What news, my lord?
Ham. O, wonderful!
Hor. Good my lord[5], tell it.
Ham. No; you will reveal it.
Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.
Mar. Nor I, my lord.
Ham. How say you, then: would heart of man once think it?[6]
But you'll be secret?
Hor. }
Mar. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.
Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave[7].

1. *So be it!* if spoken by Hamlet, as in Q^2 (F. gives it to Marcellus), either is a kind of "amen" to Horatio's prayer (cp. *Macbeth*, II, 1, 28-9), or refers to the writing on the tables or, more probably, confirms "I have sworn it."

2. Thought to have been the falconer's call to make his hawk "*come*" down. This bit of levity, in almost mechanical response to Horatio's "*Illo, ho, ho!*", affords some momentary semblance of relief to Hamlet's overstrained nerves and preludes to the fooling of Marcellus, and Horatio that follows.

3. *Enter... Marcellus.* On the Elizabethan stage, which could represent (cp. p. 209, n. 7), highly variable distances (apart from its being night; cp. I, 1, 14), they may have appeared before this. In the quartos, *Enter* is printed immediately after the soliloquy; before 113, in F.

4. *How is it?* much like "well?"

5. *Good my lord* (for the construction cp. sc. III, 46) = my lord, be good enough to.

6. *How say you*; Fr. "*qu'en dites-vous?*"—*Heart of man*, 65.—*Once* = at any time, ever.

7. *Denmark* The natural continuation would have been, "but the king of it is more than his match in villainy." But how much would

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave.
To tell us this.
Ham. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance[1] at all,
I hold it fit that we shake[2] hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point[3] you;
For every man hath business and desire,
Such as it is[4]; and for my own poor[5] part,
Look you, I'll go pray[6].
Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.
Hor. There's no offence, my lord.
Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick[7], but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest[8] ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster it as you may[9]. And now, good friends,

Hamlet lose in moral stature, if he could let the abominable secret pass his lips at once, even to Horatio alone! Him he will take into confidence later (III, II, 75).—*Arrant*, notorious, unmitigated.

1. *Circumstance* = circumlocution, roundabout polite speech.

2. *Fit that we shake*. Cp. "meet... I set it down" (107).

3. *Shall*; the speaker will have nothing to do with it.—*Point* = direct.

4. *Such as it is*, spoken by one to whom "*all the uses of this world*" were, even before the catastrophic revelation, "*how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable!*" (II, 133-134).

5. *Poor*. Cp. 142 and 185; also, p. 27, n. 2, and II, II, 270.

6. *Go* and *pray* for strength to live on in such a world.

7. *By Saint Patrick*; who, "*as you know, keeps Purgatory*," as a character observes in one of Dekker's plays, or (if not *and*) who (as Dowden suggested), being the saint that banished all venomous creatures from Ireland, will most properly see justice done upon the "*serpent*" that "now wears the crown" (39-40). Either explanation makes Hamlet use *offence* both with the meaning given it by Horatio and, secretly, with that of "crime," bearing on the Ghost's revelation. Cp. III, II, 212 and IV, 36.

8. *Honest*, not deceitful with "wicked intent" (IV, 42), not "the devil in a pleasing shape," as Hamlet himself will again suspect later (II, II, 600-1). But to Marcellus and Horatio the word may convey little more than the French "*brave fantôme*" might. Cp. note on 150.

9. *As you may*, as best you can.

As you are friends, scholars and soldiers[1],
Give[2] me one poor request.
Hor. What is it, my lord? we will.
Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.
Hor.
Mar. } My lord, we will not.
Ham. Nay, but swear it.
Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.
Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.
Ham. Upon my sword.
Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already[3].
Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed[4].
Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.
Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, truepenny[5]?
Come on[6] : you hear this fellow in the cellarage[7] :
Consent to swear.
Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.
Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

1. *Scholars and soldiers* (trisyllabic) = apparently both fellow-soldiers and (in spite of what the Marcellus of I, 42, had been made to say; cp. p. 11 n. 2) fellow-*scholars*.

2. *Give* : grant.

3. *Already*, the form having been " in faith; " which Hamlet does not think solemn enough.

4. Hilt and blade forming a cross, and the practice being, apparently, an adaptation of the heathen custom of swearing by the edge—which, with Christian as with heathen, would do justice on a perjurer, as one of the characters in the *Spanish Tragedy* reminds another, after he has thus sworn (II, 1, 91-9).

5. *Clarendon* aptly compares hysterical laughter and the jests of dying men, and notes that such very free and easy prose is also calculated to deceive the hearers about the character of the Ghost's communication.—*Truepenny* = honest fellow; *bonne pièce* (D.).

6. *Come on* : come! now then! Fr. " *allons!* ".

7. *In the cellarage*, under the stage, as the original editions direct. " Shakspere might call the place where he laid his story Ephesus or Athens, Bohemia or Illyria; none the less did he lay it not in any of these fabled places but, frankly, on the stage of his theatre " (Brander Matthews, *Shakspere as Playwright*, 1913).—Lines 150-151 are, fitly, unmetrical; cp. 112-4 and n. 9 p. 248.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.
Ham. Hic et ubique[1]? then we'll shift our ground[2].
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.
Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear[3].
Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work in the earth so fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends[4].
Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome[5].
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your[6] philosophy.
But come;
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy[7],
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself[8],
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic[9] disposition on,

1. *Hic et ubique?* (cp. note on I, 42) = "here and everywhere? = art thou ubiquitous, able (as a ghost should be) to follow us through any material obstacles, anywhere?

2. *Then*, by way of testing this ubiquity.—*Shift our ground*, as a character in Fletcher's *Woman's Prize* also does, when taking an oath (Bradley).

3. "Swear *by his sword*" Q².

4. *Worthy*, deserving praise; *pioner* (main accent on the first) = pioneer (main accent on the last); cp. "*enginer*," III, IV, 206—*Once more*, to make up the mystic number three.

5. And therefore receive it as one should welcome a stranger (as regards the playing on words, here adjective and noun, cp. e. g. p. 48 n. 7) i. e. without inhospitable questioning.

6. *Your* (for which F has "*our*") may well mean no more than "philosophy, which, *you know*, is thought to embrace all things," though a gentle hit at Horatio's cool school-training (cp. I, 23-30 and 165) would be in perfect accord with what precedes. The main emphasis, in any case, must be on "*philosophy*," not to make the courteous Prince a prig. Cp. e. g. "your players" in III, II, 3; also V, I, 57.

7. *So... mercy*; optative: "may Heaven's mercy help you as" (= in the same degree as) you keep the oath that I am now going to propose.

8. However strangely or oddly (which is more) I may bear myself.

9. *Antic*, absurd from fantastic incongruity.—*Disposition*, turn of mind.—On this artifice of Hamlet see Appendix *D*.

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall[1],
With arms encumber'd thus[2], or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase[3],
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, and if we would'[4],
Or 'If we list[5] to speak,' or 'There be, and if they might[6],'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note[7]
That you know aught of[8] me: this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most[9] need help you,
Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*] So[10], gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you[11]:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you[12],
God willing, shall not lack[13]. Let us go in together;
And still[14] your fingers on your lips, I pray.

1. Hamlet's fertility of mimetic illustration will leave the "*shall,*" grammatically, in the air (hence, *to note*, 178).

2. *Encumber'd* in each other, apparently; folded as if to bar thoughts in.—*Thus, this.* Hamlet could scarcely be a Shakespearean character, if he had not much of the actor in him. As regards other personages of this single play, cp. e. g. Ophelia, II, I, 89, as well as Laertes, "*thus* wide I'll ope my arms," IV, v, 127.

3. *Pronouncing* = the pronouncing; not till much later did this construction (cp. II, I, 91) become vulgar.—*Doubtful,* implying something, though leaving in doubt what.

4. *And* (of which the "an" of most modern editions is a later, clipped, form) = if; so that "*and if*" is an intensive reduplication = if *indeed*; cp. p. 25 n. 9.—*As* and this *or* (like the 2nd in 176) count, metrically, as little as would directions, at a rehearsal.

5. *List* = pleased, wished, chose.

6. *Be* = are indeed some that. —*Might,* were free to *speak.*

7. *Giving out,* declaration.

8. *Of,* about.

9. *Most* = greatest.

10. *So,* this being done.

11. *Commend me* = recommend myself.—*To* is very slightly accented; *you,* not at all (cp. 186). The tone has the ease of "gentle" speech to "gentle" hearts.

12. *Friending* = friendliness, desire to friend (= befriend), found as a verb not in Shakespeare only.

13. *Shall,* will not, I *promise* you. —*Lack* = be lacking, wanting.

14. *Still,* p. 11, n. 10.

The time is out of joint[1] : O cursed spite[2],
That ever I was born to set it right[3]! 190
Nay[4], come, let's go together. [*Exeunt*

ACT II[5].

Scene I[6]. *A room in Polonius's house.*

Enter Polonius *and* Reynaldo[7].

Pol. Give him this money and these notes[8], Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous[9] wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire[10]
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it. 5

Pol. Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir[11],

1. *The time*, the present time or times.—*Out of joint* : dislocated, unhinged.

2. *Spite*, vexatious ill-will (of Fate).

3. The rhyme sonorously marks off 180-190 not only as an aside (cp. note on III, IV, 178-179), a kind of vehement articulate sigh, but as practically concluding the scene (cp. II, 256-257); a scene at the beginning of which (29-31) Hamlet yearned to "sweep to his revenge with wings as swift as the thoughts of love." The revelation about his mother was, however, still to come.

4. *Nay*, a rapid rebuke for having just lost himself in bitter regret.

5. *Act II*, after about two months. In the third act, divided by one night from the present one, Ophelia will say (sc. II, l. 115) that King Hamlet has been dead twice as long (cp. I, II, 138). From the first words of Polonius, here, we find that Laertes, in Paris, apparently needs fresh supplies; and in sc. II the Danish ambassadors will be back from Norway. Hamlet has, more than once, written to Ophelia and made attempts to see her (109-110), but, in the way of revenge, has done nothing.

6. *Sc. I.*, a sequel to I, III.

7. *Enter old Polonius with his man or two*, Q^2; cp. Introd., p. xx n. 1.

8. *Notes* i. e. letters.

9. *Shall* : 1° take my word for it, as 2° you will be obeying my will. —*Marvellous*; p. 40 n. 3.

10. *Inquire* (cp. p. 6 n. 10) Q^2 = "inquiry" F.

11. *Look you*; cp. the still current "mind you."—*Sir*. p. 1, n. 6.

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris[1],
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep[2],
What company[3], at what expense; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question[4],
That they do know my son, come you more nearer[5]
Than your particular demands will touch it[6].
Take[7] you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him' : do you mark this, Reynaldo?
Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.
Pol. 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:
But if it be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so[8]' : and there put on him[9]
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may[10] dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips[11]
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty[12].

1. *Me*, more subtle than "for me." —*Danskers* (from *Danske* Denmark) is the Danish word for *Dane*.

2. *How* they live.—*Who*, more precise than the "*what*" of l. 7.—*Means*, the relation between which and "*expense*" (next line) signifies debts or not (cp. I, III, 76).—*Keep*, lodge (still a Cambridge phrase: and not rare in the U. S. A.).

3. *What company*, governed by '*keep*,' in a quite current sense this time.

4. *Encompassment*, encircling; here, questioning round and round a point that one gradually nears. —*Drift*, direction secretly followed. —*Question*, collective.

5. *More nearer*; cp. note on *chiefest*, I, II, 117.

6. Than you would attain by enquiries about *him*—instead of which, leave off *direct* questioning altogether.—As regards *your*, cp. p. 58, n. 6.—*Particular* = concerning him personally. *Will*, I, II, 256.—*It*, your goal or aim, what you wish to find out.

7. *Take* take upon you, assume, pretend to have.

8. *So and so* thus and thus, to this and that.

9. *Put on him*, charge him with—That this should be the 12th line (out of 19) ending with an unstressed syllable, is a degree of metrical laxness (the first part of l. 6 was prose; cp. 49-53) in accord with the character of the scene, and thus not at all, it seems, necessarily un-Shakespearean (cp. *Introd.* p. XVIII f.).

10. *May*; cp. p. 6 n. 8.

11. After *wanton* and the more boldly defiant *wild*, comes the all-indulgent phrase "*usual slips.*"

12. Construe: companions to (= for, of).—*Youth and liberty*, youth *with* the temptations o liberty, youth *at* liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.
Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling[1]:
Drabbing[2]: you may go so far.
Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.
Pol. Faith, no; as you may season[3] it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaint-
That they may seem the taints of[5] liberty. [ly[4]
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed[6] blood,
Of general assault[7].
Rey. But, my good lord,—
Pol. Wherefore should you do this?
Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.
Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant[8]:
You laying these slight sullies[9] on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd in[10] the working,
Mark you,

1. *Fencing*, in itself a most excellent exercise. But excellence in it might lead to "*quarrelling*" without cause; apart from other risks in the frequentation of *fencers* (Fr. *bretteurs*), who might be sharpers (Fr. *aigrefins*) as well.—The ring of the line is unmistakably trochaic. In traditional scansion, *Ay* forms one foot by itself (cp. I. 36 and IV. VII, 59), and "quarrelling" (with its first syllable bearing both a grammatical and a rhetorical stress) gives a disyllabic feminine ending; cp. p. 61 n. 9.

2. *Drabbing*, consorting occasionally with drabs, low women of dissolute lives.

3. *May*, are at liberty to *season* (=temper, cp. I, II, 192).

4. *Breathe*=tell with gentlest breath, whisper with all gentleness. —*Quaintly*=artfully, skilfully.

5. *Taints of*: blemishes inseparable from.

6. *Unreclaimed*, untamed. "Reclaim" was the legal term for reducing animals that were *ferae naturae* (i. e. wild) to domestication.

7. *Of general assault*: such as assaults youth in general, not peculiar to this or that young man.

8. *Fetch*, stratagem, or dodge, calculated to reach (cp. 63) and catch.—*Of warrant*=warranted to succeed.

9. *Sullies*, stains; to sully = to soil (Old French "*souillier*" = "*souiller.*")

10. *In*, in the course of. Q^2 has "*with*" i. e. owing to.

Your party in converse, him you would sound[1],
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes[2]
The youth you breathe[3] of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence[4];
'Good sir,' or so[5], or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition[6]
Of[7] man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something: where did I leave[8]?

Rey. At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and 'gentleman.'

Pol. At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry; He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or the other[9] day,
Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in his rouse[10];
There, falling out[11] at tennis[12]: or perchance,

1. *Converse*, accented on the second, as only the verb now is.—*Him* = he whom.

2. *Having*, to be pronounced here "ha'ing", or very like it, and scanned accordingly; *if* one follows such intransigent disyllabists as Abbott (§ 466). Making *ever* = *e'er* seems a more natural solution on the same strict lines. *Nor* should one forget the general prosodic character of the scene (cp. 19 n., 25 n., 57 n.).—*In* (governed by "*guilty*," 44) = in the matter of, as regards.—*Prenominate* (for the form, cp. *coagulate*, II, II. 460) has the ponderousness of a report at law; cp. *crimes* i. e. offences with which he is *incriminated*, in contrast with the "*slight sullies*" of 39.

3. *Breathe*. Cp. 31 and IV, VII, 66.

4. *Closes* (present for future, as more vivid) = falls in, agrees.—*This consequence*, these words in consequence.

5. *So*, something of the sort.

6. *Addition* = something added to the name, to distinguish the person more fully; title. Cp. I, IV, 20.

7. *Of*: proper to.

8. *Leave* off.

9. One of the colloquial clippings in the old edd., *t'other* (Q^1 and F; Q^2, *th'other*), is tempting.

10. *O'ertook* (cp. II, II, 83; V, II, 384; Abbott § 443) = overcome; then and later, a euphemism for drunk.—*Rouse* (I, II, 127) here = carousal, drinking-bout.

11. *Falling out*, "quarrelling".

12. *Tennis* = Fr. *la paume*. Laertes was in Paris; and a contemporary English lexicographer, Minsheu,

'I saw him enter such a house'[1].
See you now[2];
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp[3] of truth :
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach[4],
With windlasses and with assays of bias[5],
By indirections find[6] directions out :
So by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?[7]

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be with you; fare you well[8].

Rey. Good my lord[9]!

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself[10].

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music[11].

Rey. Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell! [*Exit Reynaldo.*

speaks of the French as the *only* (=unique, incomparable; cp. III, II, 117) tennis players.

1. *House* of ill fame.

2. Cp. 41.

3. *Carp*, big fish.

4. *Of* : that have. Cp. "thieves of mercy," IV, VI, 20.—*Reach* : capacity to reach.

5. *Windlasses*, properly a term of the chase, then. A *windlass* was a circuit, made to intercept game; hence, a roundabout way of proceeding.—*Assay*, not a rare form of "essay" then, in the sense of attempt, trial.—*Of bias* (cp. French "*de biais*" = on the bias) = oblique. The metaphor (like others in Shakespeare, e. g. III, I, 65) is from the game of bowls. A leaden weight, inserted in one side of the bowl, made it run in a curve, so that the player, instead of aiming straight at the ball he was to hit, had to calculate the proper degree of *indirectness*.

6. *Indirections*, indirect means. —*Directions* = direct indications. Polonius, with a self-complacent chuckle, gives both words a slight twist from their usual meaning.

7. *Shall you*, are you sure (I. 3) to find out.—*Have me* = seize my meaning.

8. *Be wi'*, printed "*buy*" both in Q and in F (cp. "good-*bye*"), was certainly not pronounced as two full syllables.—*Fare you well*: note the emphatic fullness of phrase.

9. *Reynaldo*, in grateful acknowledgement of so much "humanity." "Towards thine inferiors show much humanity and some familiarity" (Lord Burleigh's instructions for his son's guidance; see note on I, III, 74).

10. *Inclination*, collective. — *In yourself* : for yourself, and not letting "out" what you observe and think.

11. *Music*, an accomplishment all but indispensable to a gentleman at a time when lutes hung in barbers'shops for customers to while away the time of waiting,

Enter OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of God?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet[1],
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd[2];
No hat[3] upon his head: his stockings foul'd[4],
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle[5];
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport[6]
As if he[7] had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love[8]?

Oph. My Lord, I do not know;
But truly I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm:
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,

and, on the stage, a viol da gamba against the wall was among the indications of an interior (cp. G. H. Cowling, *Music on the Shakespearian Stage*).

1. *Closet* ("chamber" in F), small private room. Cp. III, II, 314.

2. *Doublet*, Fr. "*pourpoint*". —*Unbrac'd* = unfastened.

3. *No hat*. The total absence of this conspicuous article of dress would shock an Elizabethan young lady all the more as it was then removed from the head much less than with us (cp. note to V, II, 94).

4. *Foul'd*, made foul.

5. *Ungarter'd* i. e. the hose (= breeches) being so. If you are desperately in love, Rosalind tells Orando, at the end of scene II of act III of *As You Like It*, "your hose should be ungartered".—*Down-gyved*, fallen down, and thus looking like gyves (=fetters); *his ancle* = the ankle.—On the Elizabethan stage, disorder and slovenliness in dress may have characterized Hamlet henceforth. In III, IV, Rowe's ed. (1709) shows him with one stocking half down.

6. *So*, more emphatic, it seems than "as" would be.—*Purport* (accented, here, on the last syllable), an old French word = "*teneur*," means, here, expression.

7. *He*, the grammar of emphatic clearness; and the pause before and the emphasis fully make up for the syllable that mechanical scansion would find missing.

8. *Thy* = of thee.—*Love* is the point, for of Hamlet's "*transformation*" (next scene, l. 5) we shall there find that many at

He falls to such perusal[1] of my face
As[2] he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of[3] mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk[4]
And end his being[5] : that done, he lets me go :
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out of doors he went without their helps[6],
And to the last bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy[7] of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself[8]
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures[9]. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?[10]

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,

Court must have, to say the least, "heard" already. As to Polonius's diagnosis, ll. 78-80 enumerated, indeed, marks, well known at the time, of a lover in an extreme state of what Rosalind (cp. note on l. 79) calls "careless desolation." But the conventional fitness is suspicious in itself; that the explanation should occur to Polonius, and that the "old fool" (II, II, 219) should, by and by (102), feel exultingly sure, would be almost enough to prove that "*love*" has nothing to do with it; and much of the gesticulation and attitudinising that follow (87-100) shows that Hamlet was, to a very large extent, *acting* an "antic" part.

1. *Perusal*, attentive examination

2. *As*; cp. I, II, 217. For the metrical value of the pause within the line cp. 83.

3 *Of*, cp. I, v, 175. Here, the scarcely accented preposition has the advantage of continuing the effect of *a little*.

4. *As* = "that" F.—*Bulk*, in its old sense of trunk, or chest, here.

5. *Being*, with the "extra syllable" frequent before a pause.

6. *Helps* (thus, Q^2 at least); cp. notably "*reaches*" I, IV, 56.

7. *The very*, exactly the; *ecstasy*, state in which one is beside oneself, transport, madness. Polonius, an expert in all things, is one in what we should now call mental pathology (Cp. next scene, 148-151).

8. *Whose violent property* : the violence proper (= natural) to which; *fordoes* (with "for" privative, as in "forget") = does away with, destroys.

9. *Natures*; cp. 98.

10. *What*, introducing the question (cp. p. 4 n. 7).—Note the extreme laxness of metre (cp. p. 61 n. 9).

I did repel his letters and denied
His access[1] to me.
Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted[2] him : I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy[3]!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion[4]. Come, go we to the king[5] :
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love[6].
Come. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.[7] *A room in the castle.*

Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and* Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
Moreover[8] that we much did long to see you,

1. *Access*, accented on the first (though not usually then, in this sense).

2. *Quoted* (" coted " Q²) = set him down, in my mind, as being this or that.

3. *Beshrew*, a comparatively mild imprecation, expressing intense regret. Cp. the obsolete " I shrew " = I curse = a plague on.—*Jealousy* (cp. IV, v, 19) = suspicion, truly here, as it calls itself in *Venus and Adonis* l. 649, " affection's sentinel ".

4. *Proper* = natural; cp. 103.—*Cast beyond ourselves*, = overreach ourselves in our too " discreet " forecastings and other calculations. —*Discretion*, I, II, 5.

5. *Go we*, a significant short cut.

6. To hide which might cause more grief (because more harm) to us than to utter (let out, tell) the Prince's love for you may cause hatred on the part of King and Queen (who may well suspect you of having entrapped him, and me of having either assisted or connived; next scene, 128-39). Rhyme, antithetical emphasis, and compactness of sententious phrasing that might verge on oracular crabbedness, best suited (to Elizabethan ears and minds) the conclusion of a scene.

7. *Sc. II* begins much in the key of I, II.

8. *Moreovẽr* = besides,

The need we have to use you did provoke[1]
Our hasty sending[2]. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation[3]; so call it,
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was[4]. What it should be[5],
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from[6] the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of[7]. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days[8] brought up with him,
And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour[9],
That[10] you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time: so by your companies[11]
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather[12]
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether[13] aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy[14].

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres[15]. If it will please you

1. *Did*, there is royal deliberateness in the repeated use of the more elaborate grammatical form.—*Provoke*, give rise to, be the immediate and urgent occasion of.

2. *Sending* for you.

3. *Transformation*, apparently intended to count for 5 syllables (cp. "malefactions" II, II, 593); in which case, F.'s insertion of "*I*" after "*so*", would be one of its modernising touches. Cp. next note.

4. *Sith nor* = "since not" F.—*The exterior*; cp. end of n. 5 p. 65; p. v, l. 21.—*That*; I, II, 17.

5. *Should* (stressed), the auxiliary of intense wondering = can possibly.

6. *Put him from* = parted him from (cp. IV, v, 75), deprived him of. Cp. III, I, 174-175.

7. *Of* emphasizes the pretended impossibility.

8. *Of so young days* = from days when you three were so young.

9. *Sith* = since then.—*Neighbour'd to* = nearly associated with.—*Haviour* = behaviour, conduct. F. has "humour."—The Guildenstern and the Rosenkrantz that came to the court of Elizabeth had actually been students at Wittenberg.

10. *That*; cp. note on "did" l. 3.—*Your rest* = to rest, remain.

11. *Companies*; cp. I, IV, 56; II, I, 98, etc.

12. Has no comma after it, in either Q^2 or F^1.

13. *Whether* (prosodically cp. *whither*, I, v, 1) = enabling us to know whether; cp. l. 286. The line is not in F.

14. That, once disclosed, it lies within our power to remedy.

15. *Adheres* = is closely attached. L. 19-21 might almost be entitled "Any mother to any two friends

To show us so much gentry[1] and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply[2] and profit of our hope,
Your visitation[3] shall receive such thanks
As fits[4] a king's remembrance.
Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of[5] us,
Put your dread pleasures more into[6] command
Than to[7] entreaty.
Guil. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent[8],
To lay our service freely[9] at your feet,
To be commanded.
King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.
Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz[10].
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

of her son's, that, she hopes, will help him." What follows is not quite so unmistakable.

1. *So*, gently intensive: cp. p. 65 n. 6.—*Gentry* = gentlemanlike courtesy (cp. V, II, 111), an acceptation not special to Shakespeare.

2. *Supply* = supplying with what is needed i. e. assistance.

3. *Visitation.* "Visit" is not used by Shakespeare as a substantive.

4. *Fits*: it is fitting should be received in token of.

5. *Of* = on (cp. I.*68 n.), over.

6. *Dread*, dreaded.—*Pleasures.* (cp. 14), what you are *both* pleased to desire.—*Into* the form of.

7. *To* = turn them to, give them the turn of.

8. The punctuation is that of F.; and Q^2, having no comma after "*ourselves*," gives the line still more definite unity.—*In the full bent* (originally, extent to which a bow is *bent*) thus appears to mean "to the full extent of our capacity". (cp. III, II, 355).

9. *Freely*, not like men compelled, but willingly, gladly; unreservedly too.

10. Lines 33-4 are the only lines common (with slight differences in the form of the names) to Q^2; F, and Q^1 (where the interview is shorter by half, and very stiffly and poorly worded). But, if they did occur, as they easily might, in the primitive *Hamlet*, they could have little, there, of the significance with which the intellectual atmosphere of Shakespeare's play irradiates them. "*Gentle Guildenstern*" and "*gentle Rosencrantz*" are indeed interchangeable.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our practices[1]
Pleasant and helpful to him!
Queen. Ay, amen!
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.
King. Thou still[2] hast been the father of good news.
Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege[3],
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king[4]:
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure[5]
As it hath us'd to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.
King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear[6].
Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit[7] to that great feast.
King. Thyself do grace[8] to them, and bring them in.
[*Exit Polonius.*
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source[9] of all your son's distemper.
Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main[10];

1. *Heavens* = Heaven.—*Practices* (clearly not pejorative) = proceedings.

2. *Still*; p. 11 n. 10.

3. *Assure you* (F.) = assure yourself, be assured. The quartos have, less forcibly, "I assure."—*Liege*, sovereign lord ("*lige seigneur*," in mediaeval French), a formally solemn appellation, which Polonius alone uses, in this play.

4. *Hold to* seeems to mean "hold as due to, at the disposal of" ("*consacre*", Derocquigny).—As regards the subtle implication in *gracious*, cp. I, I, 164 n. and IV, v, 113.

5. *Trail*, track of an animal, pursued by the scent, a matter of "flair".—*Sure*: surely.

6. The meagre stiffness of this line might lead one to suspect it belonged to some earlier form of the play. It is not in Q^1, however.

7. *Fruit* = dessert.

8. *Grace*, I, II, 124

9. *Head and source.* The emphatic tautology is in the same key as the "*all*" that follows.

10. *Doubt* = suspect, fear, I, II, 256.—*But* = than, I, I, 108; *the main* (substantive, Onions' *Glossary*)

His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.
King. Well, we shall sift him[1].
Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.
Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?
Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first[2], he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found[3]
It was against your highness: whereat[4] griev'd,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests[5]
On[6] Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay[7] of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee[8],
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack[9]:

-the chief point, the chief cause that can be imagined.

1. *Sift*, question closely, in order to separate, as through a sieve, possible truth from mere fancy.—*Him*, Polonius.

2. *Upon our first* words, or application to him, on the subject; rather than precisely our first "*greeting and* desire" (*Clar.*)—i. e. request, not sympathetic wish as in I. 60.—*Out*="forth," Q1.

3. *Truly found* -found that, in truth.

4. *Griev'd*=both sorry and angry. —For the general structure and style of the speech, cp. I, I, 80-104, though this, being "most joyful," is a trifle more rapid.

5. *Was*, really governed by "*impotence*," the effect of "sickness" and "age."—*Borne in hand*, deluded by declarations or "appearances."—*Sends*, without "he" before it, for speed (cp. n. 5).—*Arrest*=formal orders (emphatic plural) to "suppress the levies" *and* appear before him, as shown by what immediately follows (cp. the *arrest* of Death, V, II, 336).

6. *On* was then used more extensively than now to express authority over.

7. *The assay*=the assault (*N.E.D.*, which has an instance a hundred years later than this).

8. *Fee*, apparently in the sense of gift in recognition of services rendered.

9. *The Polack*, as in IV, IV, 25, ="the Pole" (*ibid.* 21) i. e. the King of Poland, as king.

With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Giving a paper*
That it might please you to give quiet pass[1]
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance[2]
As therein are set down.
King. It likes[3] us well;
And at our more consider'd time[4] we'll read,
Answer, and think[5] upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took[6] labour :
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast[7] together :
Most welcome home! [*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*
Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate[8]
What majesty should[9] be, what duty is,
Why day is day; night, night; and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit[10],
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad :
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is it but to be nothing else but mad?

1. *Pass* = passage; cp. e. g. *avouch*, I, I, 57.

2. *Regards... allowance* : considerations of *safety for the country* thus passed through, and *permission for the troops* to pass through it (or simply, in Dowden's phrase, safe and allowable conditions?). Cp. note on " conveyance, " IV, IV, 3.

3. *Likes* = pleases.

4. *At.... time* : at a time when we can give the question more consideration (i. e. reflection). For " considered " = characterized by consideration, cp. Schmidt, vol. II, pp. 1417-1418.

5. *Answer, and think*, a not unnatural inversion of the logical order. In classical rhetoric, it bears the Greek name of *hysteron-proteron* : putting *last* what should logically have come *first*.—*Business*, here trisyllabic, in deliberate gravity; contrast Polonius's way of dismissing it, I. 85.

6. *Well-took*, (cp. and contrast p. 255 n. 9) = successfully taken.

7. *Feast*. Cp. I, II, 124-8.

8. *Expostulate* = *enquire*, discuss, exhaustively (not peculiar to Sh.).

9. *Should* (cp. l. 7, and contrast " what duty *is* ") emphasizes the difficulty for mere mortals of " defining " (l. 93) what actually partakes of " divinity " (IV, v, 115).

10. *Soul*, essence.—*Wit*, as Polonius disclaims all " art " (96), seems to have here (as in the still current " to have the wit of doing something ") its old meaning of wisdom, sound sense; cp. 199.

But let that go.[1]

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure[2];
But farewell it[3], for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then : and now remains
That we find[4] out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective[5] comes by cause :
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend[6].
I have a daughter—have while she is mine—
Who, in[7] her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise[8].

[*Reads*]

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,[9]—
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; ' beautified ' is a vile phrase : but you shall hear[10]. Thus :

[*Reads*]

' In her excellent white bosom, these &c. '[11]

1. *Let that go* : let that go by, let us say no more about it.

2. *Figure* of speech, artful arrangement of words.

3. *Farewell* to *it.*—*No art* or artifice either (Delius).

4. *Find* : should find; cp. I, v, 107 and 128.

5. *Defective*, which is a defect.

6. *Perpend* (for the effect of weighty isolation, cp. I, 41 and 61), most attentively weigh what now follows.

7. *In* : from a sense of.

8. *This*, which was written before the action of the play began, all later letters having been "repelled" (sc. I. 108).—*Gather* the facts and *surmise* what they imply.

9. Nashe, in 1594. dedicated his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* "to the most beautified lady, the lady Elizabeth Carey." The word occurs in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, I, 55. That Polonius should blame the expression, is *no* indication that Shakespeare had altered his mind about it; but a certain youthfulness about the letter seems to justify the impression that he had, by this time, come to think it, not "*vile*", i. e. wretched, indeed, but an affectation (though most pardonable at the imitative age). Perhaps "*faite* (par le Ciel) *tant belle*" might suggest something like it in French.

10. *You shall hear*, I will read it to you.

11 *Excellent* = excellently (as in "excellent well," 175); cp. "*En son*

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?
Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful[1].
[*Reads*] 'Doubt thou the stars are fire; 116
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be[2] a liar;
But never doubt I love. 119
'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers[3]; I have not art to reckon[4] my groans: but that I love thee best, O most Best[5], believe it. Adieu.
'Thine evermore, most dear lady,
whilst this machine is to him[6],
HAMLET.'
This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me, 125
And more above, hath his solicitings[7],
As they fell out by[8] time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.
King. But how hath she

blanc, son candide sein" (D.). Women, commentators note by the way, appear to have then had bosom-pockets.—*These* letters (cp. IV, VII, 37), or verses, or more indefinite still.—*Etc.*, as Polonius is not likely to skip anything, *may* announce, tantalisingly, what will follow. Q^2, however, is the only real authority for it.

1. *Stay*, p. 36 n. 3.—*Will be faithful*, will faithfully report the facts, when the time comes.

2. *Doubt truth to be* suspect that truth is. The sudden slight change in the use of "doubt" (cp. I. 56) would pleasantly tickle youthful wits; cp. p. 73 n. 9.

3. *Ill*: cp. I. 111.—*Numbers* (Lat. *numeri*), versifying.

4. *Reckon*, number metrically.

5. *Most Best*; cp. note on *chiefest*, I, II, 117; and what superlative, though termed by grammarians absolute, ever did, or will, satisfy a lover?—The capital *B* in F, and the absence of any stopping after this *best* in either Q^2 or F., seem to confirm that, unlike the first, it is an epithet of the beloved.

6. *This machine*, of course, philosophical for "this body;" *is*, probably belongs, though Dowden understood, more subtly, "is attached."—Prof. Boas notes the phrase as one more symptom in the epistle of "the undergraduate stage of existence," and inclines to diagnose a condition of feeling, sincere no doubt, but not very much deeper than a "sentimental dalliance" in Vacation time. Dowden's not altogether irreconcilable comment had been: "the letter is no more simple or homogeneous than the writer."

7. *More above* = moreover.—*Solicitings*, as a lover.

8. *Fell out*, occurred.—*By* "seems to mean *near*, hence *with*" (Abbott § 145). Could it mean: enumerating them according to?

Receiv'd his love?
Pol. What do you think of me?
King. As of a man faithful and honourable.
Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might[1] you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that[2],
Before my daughter told me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book[3],
Or given my heart a winking[7], mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle[4] sight;
What might you think? No, I went round[5] to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak[6]:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star[7];
This must not be': and then I prescripts[8] gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

1. *Might* I, I, 56.

2. *I*, not quite the fact (I, III, 91).—*That*, significantly stressed, of course.

3. At a *desk* one writes and in a *table-book* (= table, tables, of I, v, 98, 107) one writes too, so that the line obviously means: if I had made myself *a means of correspondence*: whether by taking verbal messages from the one to the other (the writing being merely metaphorical) or, perhaps, by making myself the place where they secretly agreed to deposit and look for each other's letters (Verity).—*Given my heart a winking*. One is naturally inclined to understand «winked to my heart» (taken as the seat not of emotion only) to keep "mute and dumb" (with which emphatic tautology compare "head and source," 55). More than one Shakespearean scholar, however, takes "*wink*" to mean here (as it certainly does elsewhere sometimes) to close the eyes for quite a length of time. The sense would then be "closed my eyes" (contrast "*look'd*" in l. 139), so as to be sure to perceive nothing (and, rather too obviously, have nothing to report).

4. *Idle*, not merely, it seems, indifferent, careless, but thoughtless, void of understanding (cp. to some extent, III, II, 85); which would give a meaning as distinct from that of 138 as the sense of the latter probably is from that of 137.

5. *Round* = roundly, without mincing matters.

6. *Mistress*, not yet shortened into "miss".—*Bespeak* (a transitive and, it seems, more or less intensive formation from "speak") = address.

7. *Out of thy star* (Ff²⁻⁴ have *sphere*): placed out of thy reach by "thy fortune's star" (cp. I, v, 32).

8. *Prescripts*, instructions, both skilled and strict.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice[1];
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast[2],
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness[3],
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension[4]
Into[5] the madness wherein now he raves
And all we[6] mourn for.

King. Do you think this?

Queen. It may be, very like[7].

Pol. Hath there been such[8] a time, I'ld fain know that,
That[9] I have positively said ' 'Tis so, '
When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*[10].]
Take this from this, if this be otherwise :
If circumstances lead me, I will find

1. *Took... advice* : my advice was fruitful to her (Johnson), not given in vain.

2. *Into* was one of the disyllables with variable accent (cp. notes on *complete*, I, IV, 52 and *unto*, IV, VII, 84); and the silver-tongued Lord Chamberlain apparently avails himself of this. In this line, while the "*o*" of the first "*into*" may be slurred, that of the second should, it seems, receive a slight, but expressive, stress (cp. 151).

3. *Watch* = state of insomnia.—As regards scansion, it seems natural to consider the second "*thence*," with the pause before it, as equivalent to a whole foot; in which case "*into*" should here be accented on the last. Abbott, who, as a prosodist, was something of a Procrustes (cp. p. 63 n. 2) hesitated between this and making three syllables of "*weakness*" (printed "weakenes" in Q^2—which proves exceedingly little).

4. *Lightness* of head, light-headedness.—*Declension*, process of declining.

5. *Into*, weightily, tragically, accented, no doubt, on the last (as twice before)—Polonius has thus, to his own boundless satisfaction, pointed out the successive stages of a disorder that had no existence out of his own abundantly foolish imagination, with as much assurance, and almost as much learning, as M. Purgon prophesying to Argan (*Malade Imaginaire*, III, VI).

6. *All we* = we all.

7. *Like* = likely (F,), as in I, II, 237.

8. *Such* as I am going to define.

9. *That* : when.

10. *Pointing... shoulder.* A direction first inserted by Theobald (second quarter of the XVIIIth century). Dowden, on the strength of 167-168, preferred making the Lord Chamberlain, more (perhaps *too*) sensibly, point to his staff, or wand, of office and to the hand that holds it.

AN ELIZABETHAN STAGE

That of the *Fortune* (1600), as conjectured, from the builder's contract, by Mr. W. H. Godfrey; by kind permission of the Clarendon Press. The main features were borrowed from the *Globe*, though the pillars there were round (*like the whole theatre, inside*) and the roofing was of thatch, not tiles, before the disastrous fire of 1613.

Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre[1].
King. How may we try it further?
Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby[2].
Queen. So he does indeed.
Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras[3] then;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon[4],
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.
King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, *reading on a book*[5].

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.
Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away :
I'll board him presently.[6]
[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*
O, give me leave :
How does my good Lord Hamlet?
Ham. Well, God-a-mercy[7].

1. *Centre* " of the earth ", Q1.

2. *Here in the lobby*, in the corridor leading here, to this room of state.

3. *Arras* (from the name of the manufacturing town), tapestry, generally with coloured scenes and figures woven in, that, in Elizabethan houses, often projected from a frame and thus left some space free between it and the wall. The actual " arras " here would be that which hung at the back of the stage, in front of the players' " tire-house, " i. e. the room where they attired (i. e. dressed) themselves, and part of which, apparently (E. K. Chambers), was, on occasion, arranged into a *rear-stage* (cp. illustration, p. 77, and p. 125 n. 2).

4. *Thereon*, on that, in consequence of that.

5. Thus, F.—The quartos agree as to the place of this stage-direction (cp. p. 55 n. 3).

6. *Board* : accost.—*Presently* = immediately, at once (the usual Elizabethan meaning).

7. *God-a-mercy* = " may God *have* mercy on you. " that is to say

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well : you are a fishmonger[1]. 175

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord!

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand. 180

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion[2]—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk in the sun : conception is a blessing; but as[3] your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to it. 187

Pol. [*Aside*] How say you by that[4]? Still harping on[5] my daughter : yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone : and truly, in my youth, I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who? 195

"reward you," for your kind interest in me.

1. *Fishmonger.* Hamlet may mean "one that deals in wares (in this case, a daughter) that will not bear the sun" (Moberly). Cp. 185. There obviously is *some* coarse "double entendre"; which, to all appearance, reflects on Ophelia.

2. *Good kissing carrion* = carrion good for kissing (as if "kissing" was joined to "carrion" by a hyphen). Warburton (cp. Appendix *B*) was the first to propose reading "*god*" for "good," a "noble emendation" (Johnson), as it seemed to make the passage a vindication of Providence from responsibility for sin. It certainly explained the initial "*for*" by rendering the connection between 182-183 and 179-180 easier to grasp. What Hamlet, on the other hand, aims at, is an appearance of disconnectedness (hence the break after "*carrion*"); and his "*for*" may, after all, be merely intended to fool Polonius.

3. *As*, that is to say not in wedlock.—F. has "*not*" after "but" and a full stop after "conceive."

4. *How say you* (p. 55 n. 6) sounds very much as if Polonius were, in primitive fashion, addressing the audience.—*By* = about.

5, *Still*, I, v, 188; *harping on*, unable to speak of any other subject than (like a player on the harp that should keep striking the same string).

Pol. I mean[1], the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir : for the satirical rogue[2] says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum[3], and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently[4] believe, yet I hold it not honesty[5] to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, should[6] grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward. 204

Pol. [*Aside*] Though this be[7] madness, yet there is method in it. Will you walk out of the air[8], my lord?

Ham. Into my grave[9]?

Pol. Indeed, that's out of the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant[10] sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of[11]. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you. 214

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I

1. Hamlet had pretended (for *who* cp. p. 29 n. 1) to misunderstand "*matter*" as "cause of dispute."

2. *The satirical rogue*, whom it seems wisest not to try and identify.

3. *Purging*, discharging (as an impurity).—*Amber* (French : *ambre jaune*), in mocking allusion to the yellowish and gummy secretion of the inner corner of the eye.

4. *Powerfully and potently* (cp. "head and source," 55 and "mute and dumb," 138) = most strongly and intensely. The rarer word is the more emphatic.

5. *Honesty*. Cp. "*Honnesteté*, bienséance" (*Dict. Acad. Française*, 1694).

6. *Should grow* (with the "should" of supposition) combines the "shall grow" of Q^2 and the "should be" of F.

7. *Be* = is; no doubt is implied.

8. *The air* : this air, apparently in-door air. Polonius is not ignorant of the soothing effect of the open air, sometimes, in such "disorders" as Hamlet's too obviously is.

9. The question-mark is given by F; the affirmative (Q^2), which has far greater significance, seems rather too abrupt—With the general turn of thought that prompts the wilful misunderstanding cp. 215-7.

10. *Pregnant*, full of apt significance.

11. *Be delivered of*, bring to birth, bring forth.

will more willingly part withal[1] : except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the[2] Lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir! [*Exit Polonius.*

Guil. My honoured lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye[3] both?

Ros. As the indifferent[4] children of the earth.

Guil. Happy in that we are not over-happy: On Fortune's cap we are not the very button[5].

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? What's the news?

Ros. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near : but your news is not true[6]. Let me question more in particular[7] : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

1. *Withal*, emphatic form of *with*, used at the end of a clause, particularly when the object is a relative, as here.

2. *Go to seek*=are seeking.—*The*, rather solemn (F. has *my*); but not unusual then; cp. I, III, 89, 134.

3. *Ye* has more affectionate ease about it than the "*you*" of Q².

4. *Indifferent*, middling, neither particularly fortunate nor particularly the reverse. Cp. 232-233.

5. *Button* : knob (at the top, pretty obviously).—228-9 may be prose, but as rhythmical as airy verse.

6. Both the news and the comment on it are in the manner of clever students, but of students looking at the busy world from the moralist's point of view, which, being emphatically Hamlet's, we may imagine to have been that of his "set" too, at Wittenberg.

7. *In particular*; = in detail and personally (cp. p. 61 n. 6).

Guil. Prison, my lord! 240

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly[1] one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons[2], Denmark being one of the worst. 245

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind. 251

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream[3].

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I[4] hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. 260

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies; and our monarchs and outstretched heroes, the beggars' shadows[5]. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay[6], I cannot reason.

Ros. } We'll wait upon you[7]. 264
Guil. }

1. *Goodly* in size, on a large scale, as the context shows.

2. *Confines*, I, i, 155.—*Wards* = cells.—*Dungeons*, close, dark (often subterranean) cells.

3. *The very... ambitious*: "what the ambitious man succeeds in doing or acquiring is but a shadow of what he would like to" (Verity); or, perhaps, what the ambitious are *made of*, namely ambition, is as unsubstantial as a shadow.

4. *I*, slightly stressed. Witty unambitious Rosencrantz goes even beyond unambitious witty Guildenstern (254-5).

5. If the ambitious, typified by monarchs and outstretched (= strained, puffed out) heroes, are shadows, beggars, the antitype of them, must be the *opposite* of mere shadows, that is to say bodies, the bodies of those stretched out shadows.

6. *Fay* (= Old French "*par ma fei*") not solemn, as "by my faith" would have been.

7. By "*wait upon*" they mean

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with[1] the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended[2]. But, in the beaten[3] way of friendship, what make you[4] at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar[5] that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear[6] a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining?[7] Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly[8] with me: come, come; nay[9], speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing, but to the purpose[10]. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour[11]: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth[12], by the obligation of our ever-preserved[13] love, and by what more dear a better proposer[14] could

no more than "attend you there, dutifully accompany you to the court." He pretends to understand "attend you in general, become attendants of yours, enter your service."

1. *Sort you with*, put you with, as of the same *sort*.

2. *Dreadfully attended* may be meant spiritually (cp. the "bad dreams" of 254) but must be true literally also, in so far as this depends on Claudius and his Lord Chamberlain (cp. p. 38 n. 7).

3. *Beaten*, so that it is plain, open.

4. *What make you*, I, II, 168.

5. *Beggar*, cp. p. 56 n. 5.

6. *Dear* at.

7. *Inclining*: inclination.—*Visitation*, 25.

8. *Justly* = honestly fairly, like faithful friends.

9. *Nay*: do not hesitate.

10. *Why.... purpose*, a generally accepted emendation and combination of Q²'s rather brutally ironical "*Anything but* (apparently = except) *to'th purpose*" and F.'s comparatively tame "*Why any thing. But to the purpose; you were, etc.*"

11. *Modesties* (cp. "loves" I, I, 173), opposed to impudence.—*Colour*, conceal under specious colours.

12. *Consonancy of our youth*: our consonancy (= accord, harmony) in youth; cp. 11-12.

13. *Preserved*: unbroken.

14. *A better proposer*: one that could "propose" (= put forward) some "better" reason, in the name of which to "charge"

charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether[1] you were sent for, or no.

Ros. [*Aside to Guildenstern*] What say you?

Ham. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you[2].—If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery[3], and your secrecy[4] to the king and queen moult[5] no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame[6], the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave[7] o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire[8], why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express[9] and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god[10]! the beauty of the world! the paragon of[11] animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence

(="conjure") you.—For "*withal*", cp. 216.

1. *Even and direct*=plain and not roundabout.—*Whether*=and tell me whether; cp. I. 17.

2. *Nay* : there *no* longer is room for doubt.—*Of* = on, as, in Sh., frequently. Cp. inversely p. 215 n. 6.

3. *Shall... discovery* : shall I forestall (i. e. anticipate, or prevent, in its old and etymological sense), and thus render needless the disclosure that you would otherwise have to make of the good "*king and queen's*" purpose.

4. *Your secrecy*, the secrecy you owe.

5. *Moult*, cast, shed.

6. *Goodly* has its full force here (contrast 243).—*Frame* : structure.

7. *Brave*, splendid, as the next phrase will explain more pointedly. Cp. one use of "*brave*" in French.

8. *Fretted*, wrought in ornamental patterns; cp. the emotionally decorative *golden*.

9. *Express* = finely expressed (= moulded, modelled, shaped conformably to type, to an idea, in the philosophical sense of the word).

10. *How like a god!* Cp. IV, iv, 38, "that... *godlike* reason." There speaks the man of the Renaissance, as more than one critic has observed.

11. *The paragon of*, peerless among.

of dust[1]? man delights not me : no, nor woman neither[2], though by your smiling you seem to say so[3]. 309

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive[4] from you : we coted[5] them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service. 316

Ham. He that plays the king shall[6] be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of[7] me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target[8]; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace[9]; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere[10]; and the lady[11] shall say her mind

1. *Quintessence of dust.* The clause division in this sentence is that of F.—No prose speech in Sh. is more finished and exquisite in form than Hamlet's here, for all its richness and variety of substance. Prose it had to be, or it would not have been in key with the rest of the conversation; but, as a XIX^th century editor, Knight, wrote, it is "prose with almost more than the music of poetry."

2. *Neither*; cp. I, II, 158.

3. *You seem to say so*; a wrong guess, as it happens; but one that might well have been right.

4. *Lenten*, as meagre as lenten fare, i. e. fare in Lent.—*Shall*; cp. II, I, 67.

5. *Coted* (originally a sporting term, it seems) = passed, outstripped.

6. *Shall*, expressing the speaker's will.

7. *Of* = from.

8. *Foil*, blunt kind of sword, more or less like those used in fencing (e. g. V, II, 54).—*Target*, light round buckler.

9. *The humorous man*, the capricious, fantastic, character (Fr. "*le fantasque*").—According to Mr, W. J. Lawrence, the allusion is to a disturbance at the Globe, early in 1600, at the end of Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*.

10. *Lungs*, as the seat of loud laughter.—*Tickle o' the sere* (like a gun that goes off at the least touch) = easily made to go off in laughter. With *tickle* (i. e. ticklish, unstable) *o'* cp. such phrases as "hard of heart." The "*sere*" (Fr. "*serre*," which once meant, among other things, a lock, the modern "*serrure*,") is the catch in a gunlock that keeps the hammer (Fr. "*chien*") up and is released by the trigger (Fr. "*gâchette, détente.*") In Sh.'s time, sear (the modern spelling) and trigger made one piece.

11. *The lady*; see 423.

freely, or the blank verse shall halt for it[1]. What players are they[2]?

Ros. Even[3] those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city. 326

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways[4].

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation[5].

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation[6] they did when I was in the city? are they so[7] followed?

Ros. No, indeed, are they[8] not.

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty[9]? 334

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace:

1. *Shall... for it* pretty obviously implies that, if she is *not* allowed to do so, the verse will be lame in consequence. "*Freely*," Mr. Verity understands, very ingeniously, as meaning: not thinking herself tied down to the letter of the text, improvising (metrically) whenever her memory fails her.

2. *What... they?* That he who, a few moments before, had declared, "*man delights me not*," should be so ready to welcome any players (little as he appears to have, at first, expected from them), is sufficiently in character, however, (cp. notes on I, v, 172-174, and III, II, 1), particularly for the Elizabethan stage, in some respects, a *variety* stage. Cp. A. B. Walkley on *Prof. Bradley's Hamlet*; in *Drama and Life*, 1907.

3. *Even*, I, I, 121.

4. *Their... better*: it was better for them to reside permanently in the city.—*In* = as regards.—*Both... both* I, II, 153.

5. *By the means of*: by means of, through, from.—In Q^1 we find it briefly, but very clearly, explained that they travel, not because they grow "*resty*," (same meaning as "rusty", 334) but because "*novelty*" (in the form of "*private* plays", i. e. plays in so-called private (more comfortable, expensive, and select) theatres, and "*the humour of children*") takes the greater part of their former public away from them. Does *innovation* (elsewhere = disturbance, insurrection) mean, here, simply "*novelty*" for the worse; and *inhibition*, not any authoritative interdiction, but "*ce qui le leur interdit*" (*D.*)? Or were ll. 331-59 a later interpolation (W. J. Lawrence)? Hamlet, who knew nothing of the "children" (342), asks for no explanation and goes on putting questions, as if Rosencrantz had not spoken. Q^2, not having 334-360, is even more enigmatic than F.

6. *Hold* = retain—*Estimation* = reputation.

7. *So* = as much.

8. *Are they*; cp. I, iv, 13.

9. *Rusty*, insufficiently alert to "keep in the wonted pace."

but there is, sir, an aery[1] of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question[2] and are most tyrannically clapped[3] for it: these are now the fashion, and so berattle[4] the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills[5] and dare scarce come thither. 341

Ham. What, are[6] they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted?[7] Will they pursue the quality[8] no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to[9] common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better[10]

1. *Aery.* Cotgrave (1611) has: "*Aire*: an ayrie (the spelling of Fr.) or nest of hawks;" here, the brood in the nest, the nestlings, the original meaning of the French "nids;" whence the English "*an eyas*" (primitively "*nyas*"), a hawk just taken from the nest for training.

2. *Cry out,* as "eyases" will.—*On the top of question*: louder than the matter of their speeches or the occasion requires. Cp. the criticism at the beginning of III, II.

3. *Tyrannically,* outrageously enough to "make all split" (*Midsummer Night's Dream,* I, II, 32).—*Clapped,* applauded.

4. *Berattle,* assail with the rattle of their mockeries.—*Common stages* Contrast "private plays;" see p. 86 n. 5 and next note.

5. *Goose-quills,* the pens of the writers that back the children and pour ridicule on the "common stages" and their public. The allusion must be to what one of the protagonists, Dekker, called the "*Poetomachia,*" the war waged by him, as an ally of Marston, and with the support of the company at the Globe (Shakespeare's), against Ben Jonson, with the *Children of the Chapel Royal* for his interpreters on the "private" stage of Blackfriars. Note "*sing*", 344.

6. *Are,* stressed.

7. *How... escoted?* who pays their "*escot*" (accented on the last; cp. French "*écot*"), their share in the expenses, their expenses, for them? The answer appears to have been (E. K. Chambers. *The Elizabethan Stage,* 1923. Vol. I, p. 379) the "Master of the Children" and the other members of a syndicate, as we should now call it, to which the profits went.

8. *Pursue the quality* = follow the profession. "*Quality*" seems to have been used particularly of the actors' calling. In 1592, Chettle, apologizing for the attack on the "upstart crow" in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (which he himself had only edited) calls the object of it, apparently Shakespeare, "excellent in the quality he professes."

9. *To* be.

10. *Like,* here as e. g. in 153, can only mean "likely;" which again confirms the interpretation of I, II, 237.—*Their... better*: they have not better means of living. One is almost inevitably reminded of the sigh over the "public manners" bred by "public *means*", in Sonnet XCI; but here there can be only sympathy (though born of personal experience, no doubt) with the *material* hardships of the profession.

—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession[1]? 348

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do[2] on both sides; and the nation[3] holds it no sin to tarre[4] them to controversy; there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question[5].

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains[6].

Ham. Do the boys carry it away[7]?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load[8] too. 359

Ham. It is not very strange; for[9] my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him[10] while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood[11], there is

1. *Their own succession* : the condition to which they themselves shall, one day, succeed.

2. *To do* : ado.

3. *The nation*, i. e. that part of it which counts for players and playwrights.

4. *Tarre on* = incite like dogs, hound on.

5. *There... question.* The most natural interpretation appears to be that no money was *bidden* (= offered) by theatrical managers for any *argument* (in the sense of plot of a play, as in III, II, 211), unless it made the (" children's ") poet and the (" common ") player, in the course of the piece, come to *cuffs* (= fisticuffs, figuratively speaking) about this question.

6. " Oh, l'on s'est jeté force esprit à la tête " (*D.*).

7. *Carry it away* : Fr. " *l'emporter*, " on which a French Rosencrantz might have played in the same manner.

8. *His load.* The sign over the entrance of the Globe theatre was a figure of Hercules bearing the *globe* of the world.

9. *It is not... for....* A very unguarded speech for Hamlet to make in real life. But about this the Elizabethans troubled much less, in many ways, than we have come to do; and the explosion tells the audience that Hamlet " *remembers.* "

10. *Would*, used to.—*Mows* (Fr. " *moues* "), grimaces with the mouth (Q^2 has " *mouths* ") in derision.—*Him*, the " blowt " (III, IV, 182) prince only, then.

11. *In little*, in miniature; and " the boys " are miniature men (Dowden).—*'S blood*, contracted from God's (i. e. Christ's) blood = Fr. " *sambleu* ") and originally referring to one of the elements in the Eucharist. F. conforms to the Act of 1606, forbidding profanity on the stage, by omitting the exclamation (Introd. p. XXI, n. 5).

something in this more than natural, if philosophy could[1] find it out. 365

[*Flourish of trumpets*[2] *within.*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham[3]. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony[4]: let me comply with[5] you in this garb[6], lest my extent[7] to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother[8] are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord? 374

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west[9]: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw[10].

Re-enter POLONIUS

Pol. Well be[11] with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each

1. *Could*: only could; a little in the tone of I, IV, 67.

2. *Flourish of trumpets*, like that which announces the arrival of other players, who come to offer their services to the Lord in the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*.

3. *Hamlet*, whose sudden formality ("*Gentlemen*") is both a mockery and the expression of a truth. He knows, and tells them, that they no longer are "good lads" (225) and "his excellent good friends" (224).

4. *Hands* for me to shake; *come then*: Fr. "*çà donc.*"—*Appurtenance* (= what appertains, belongs) is a fine, "ceremonious" vocable.—*Fashion*, conformity to good society manners.

5. *Comply with* (cp. V, II, 189) was a fashionable phrase, adopted from the Italian, meaning: to satisfy the demands of courtesy towards, to do the polite with.

6. *Garb* (= XVIth cent. French "*garbe*," Mod. "*galbe*", from the Italian "*garbo*") = style, fashion.

7. *Extent* = what I shall accord, in the way of welcome.

8. *Uncle-father and aunt-mother*, a revelation (to *us*) of something still deeper in him than 360-3.

9. *But... west*, only when the wind blows from that one very limited quarter. The influence of this or that wind on mental disorders, on "melancholia" for example, was a commonplace of Elizabethan pathology.

10. See Appendix *E*.

11. *Be*: may it be.

ear, a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts[1]. 381

Ros. Happily[2] he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: on Monday morning[3]; 'twas so indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome[4],—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord. 390

Ham. Buz, buz[5]!

Pol. Upon my honour,—

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass[6],—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited[7]: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light[8]. For the law of writ and the liberty[9], these are the only men. 400

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

1. *Swaddling clouts*, current then for swaddling-clothes.

2. *Happily*, I, i, 134.

3. *You say* (spoken louder and to one or the other of the couple, as if continuing a conversation with him). *On*; " a ", Q²F (p. xxi n. 8).

4. *News* almost as fresh as yours. —*You*, stressed. —*Roscius*, for whom Cicero pleaded in 79 *B. C.*

5. *Buz, buz!* According to the *Variorum Shakespeare* of 1803, a then common exclamation of contempt or impatience when any one was telling a well-known story.

6. Apparently a line from one of those popular ballads that come so readily to the lips of the Prince of Denmark. It provides a burlesque parallel to Polonius's " the actors are come... upon mine honour. "

7. *Scene... unlimited*, play in which the scene is laid in *one* place indivisibly all through, or play submitting to *no* limitations whatever, either of place or time.

8. *Seneca*, to whose influence, no doubt, is due the introduction of a Ghost into the stage version of the originally much simpler story of Hamlet. Cp. Appendix *D* and Introd. p. xi, n. 8.—*Plautus*, of whose *Menaechmi* the *Comedy of Errors* is an adaptation, which borrows a hint from the *Amphitruo* as well.

9. *Writ*=what is written (I, ii,

Pol. What a[1] treasure had he, my lord?
Ham. Why,
'One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well[2]'
Pol. [*Aside*] Still on[3] my daughter.
Ham. Am I not in the right, old Jephthah?
Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.
Ham. Nay, that follows not[4].
Pol. What follows, then, my lord?
Ham. Why,
'As by lot, God wot[5],'
and then, you know,
'It came to pass, as most like it was[6],'—

27). It seems best to take "the law and the liberty" in connection with what precedes and to interpret: "both those writings (i. e. plays) that obey the laws (= rules) and those that submit to none," rather than "both for conforming to what the author has written and for improvising."

1. *A*; Polonius echoes Hamlet's exclamative turn of phrase.

2. A fragmentary, but fairly similar, version of the popular ballad that Hamlet mockingly quotes (cp. 393) was printed, as still sung more than a century and a half later, by the antiquarian bishop Percy (1782) for the sake of its Shakespearean associations, with the additional remark that the "pleasant absurdities" in it would "divert" the reader.

3. *On*: "harping on," 188.

4. Has, like so many of Hamlet's sayings, two meanings: "that *conclusion* does not follow; that is not the conclusion to be drawn," and "those are not the *words* that follow in the ballad;" which Hamlet, acting the fool, will pretend to have meant. Perhaps, the conclusion really suggested was that Polonius too had sacrificed his daughter.

5. *Lot*, chance, with an idea of fate.—*Wot*, third person singular of the present (originally preterit) indicative of the archaic verb *to wit* = know. What "follows," in the same first stave of Percy's version, is

It so came to pass,
As God's will was,
That great wars there should be,
And none should be chief but he.

6. *Like* = probable; cp. p. 87 n. 10. Percy's third stave begins with:
It came to pass, the wars was (sic) *o'er,*
And he return'd with victory;
His dear and only daughter, first of all,
Came to meet her father foremostly;
and "*most like it was*" would apply to this more pointedly than to "*great wars.*" Hamlet, however, will (417) refer Polonius to the "*first row*" still, meaning by "*row*," not line (as sometimes then), perhaps column (Dowden), but more probably, though exceptionally, stave. (Cp. Q1's "*verse*").

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more[1]; for look, where my abridgement[2] comes. 418

Enter the Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all[3]. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend[4]? thy face is valanced[5] since I saw thee last: comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress? By'r[6] lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine[7]. Pray[8] God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring[9]. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to it

1. The vow vowed by Jephthah unto the Lord was: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering" (*Judges*, XI, 30-1);—With "*pious chanson*" (Q^2) contrast Q^1's homely "*goodly ballet*" (i. e. ballad; cp. p. 93 n. 11). Cp. Introd. p. xv, n. 7.

2. *My abridgement* (F. has the p ural) = what cuts short my talk with you *and* is welcome to do so. "What abridgement have you for this evening?" Theseus asks in *M. N. D.* V, 39, meaning "What pastime?"

3. *Masters*, kindly appreciative—*All.* F brings "*four or five*" on the stage. Cp. Introd. p. xx.

4. The punctuation after "friend" (as after "*mistress*," 423) is that of F.; cp. however note 2 p. 54. Q^2 contents itself with commas, its signs "of all work" almost. Cp. Introd. p. xxi, n. 1.

5. *Valanced*, fringed—with a beard, which thou comest to display to my face in Denmark. To "*beard*" some one is properly to oppose, or defy, him boldly to his face. Elze compares Chapman's Agamemnon saying to Achilles (*Iliad*, I, 90) that other kings durst not thus proudly "bear their beards against" him.

6. *Our*, slurred to disguise the oath; cp. the *Marry's* in II. 1; also, p. 64, n. 8. Q^1 prints *burlady*.

7. *Altitude*, finer than "height above the ground" would be.—*Chopine* (with *ch* pronounced as in "chop" and the accent on *i*, which is sounded as in "machine") here means the sole of cork, or the like, by which the shoe of that name (little worn in England, except on the stage, but much in Italy and especially in Venice) was raised high above the ground.

8. *Pray*, with the usual omission of "I," to avoid undue emphasis.

9. *Be*, optative.—*Ring*. Hamlet plays on the word A voice has a certain "ring" but so had an Elizabethan coin a "ring" (i. e. circle) round the head of the sovereign; and, if a crack from the edge extend-

like French falconers, fly[1] at anything we see : we'll have a speech straight[2] : come, give us a taste of your quality[3]; come, a passionate speech. 430

First Pl. What speech, my good lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me[4] a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million: 'twas caviary[5] to the general : but it was—as I received[6] it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine[7]—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes[8], set down with as much modesty as cunning[9]. I remember, one[10] said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury[11], nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affec-

ed to "*within the ring,*" the coin was no longer current.

1. *E'en* : "straight" (429) at this very moment, at once.—*To*, after "will" (which would be the full auxiliary here), as after "shall" and "must," often made any verb of motion unnecessary.—*Like French falconers*, explained by what immediately follows.—*Fly*, let (the hawk) fly.

2. *Straight*, straightway, directly.

3. *Quality*, p. 87 n. 8.

4. *Me*, an ethical dative, expressing merely the interest that Hamlet had taken in the speech.

5. *Caviary* (the normal English form then) = caviare, or, better, caviar. "Strange meat, like black soap," is the description given by a lexicographer in 1616; more exactly, the roe of large fish (particularly the sturgeon), pressed, salted, and eaten as a relish. An importation from Eastern Europe (chiefly from Russia), it is not generally appreciated by untrained palates.

6. *The general* (a phrase not special to Shakespeare) = people in general, the majority. Cp. the equally contemptuous phrase of the king (IV, VII, 18) "the general gender."—*I*, stressed; *received* : understood (cp. the modern familiar phrase "to take in"), took.

7. *Cried... mine.* The comparison appears to be with hounds "*overlopping*" (= giving tongue louder than) others of the same pack; but the context implies that the greater loudness means higher authority.

8. *Digested* : disposed, arranged; *in* = as regards.

9. *Set down*, written, as in I, v, 10—*Modesty* (cp. III, II, 18) = moderation; Fr. "*mesure.*" The praise, however, like that in l. 442-3, by no means prepares us for the character of the speech that the Prince of Denmark "chiefly loved".—*Cunning* = skill.

10. *One* = some one.

11. *Sallets* (an obsolete form of "salads," which are herbs *salted* and otherwise seasoned) = additions giving immoral piquancy. —*Savoury* in the same metaphoric sense oi "spicy".

tion[1]; but called it an honest method[2], as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine[3]. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido[4]; and thereabout[5] of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter : if it live in your memory, begin at this line : let me see, let me see;

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast[6],'
It is not so : it begins[7] with 'Pyrrhus';
'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable[8] arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous[9] horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion[10] smear'd

1. *Nor no*, I, II, 157.—*Matter* (which, before, meant the substance, "*la matière*") is here taken in its vaguest sense : thing, with some suggestion perhaps that it "might" (=could) be "matter" for faultfinding.—*Phrase*, collective =phrasing.—*Indict*; the spelling in Q^2 and F, "*indite*", shows that the pronunciation was the present one. —*Affection* Q^2 = "affectation" F.

2. *Honest*=chaste (cp. III, I, 103 ff.), in the sense in which one says "a chaste style" ("*method*" here), pure from any trick of meretricious affectation.

3. *Handsome* (etymologically "well *proportioned* for the hand," handy) may well mean, here, adapted to the matter, giving to connoisseurs the delicate pleasure of fitness exempt from excrescent flourishes —*Fine* : ornate.

4. *Æneas' tale to Dido*, when she received him at Carthage and he, at her request, told her how Troy fell and he became a wanderer. The version of Priam's death that follows, and is apparently Shakespeare's, owes hardly anything, even indirectly, to Vergil and not much to a passage (see appendix *F*) in *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage* (published in 1594 as played by the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel, and written by Marlowe and Nashe). The declared archaicism of style, the fierce intensity of imagery and "method," make of the "speech", whether one fully shares Hamlet's (and Coleridge's) admiration for it or not, a "study" (*perhaps*, an early study) in a manner of greater artistic interest than the comparatively even description of successive scenes of savagery in the *Tragedy*.

5. *Thereabout*, about that part.

6. *Rugged*, both materially and morally.—*The Hyrcanian beast*, Macbeth's "Hyrcan tiger" (III, IV, 101); in Latin, "*Hyrcana tigris.*" Hyrcania, a province of the ancient Persian Empire, on the Southern and South Eastern shores of the Caspian (or Hyrcanian) Sea, was already famous for its tigers in the days of Vergil.

7. *Begins*, does begin.

8. *Sable*, heraldic (cp. 454-5) for black.

9. *Couched* in ambush.—*Ominous* = fatal. Cp. "omen"=fatal event, I, I, 123.

10. *Complexion*, colour (originally, of the skin, as showing the temperament).

With heraldry more dismal : head to foot
Now is he total gules[1]; horridly trick'd[2]
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with[3] the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous[4] and damned light
To their lord's murder[5] : roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore[6],
With eyes like carbuncles[7], the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire[8] Priam seeks. '
So,[9] proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion[10].

First Pl. 'Anon[11] he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique[12] sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command : unequal[13] match'd,

1. *Total* = complete.—*Gules* (*geules* in F.; cp. French : *gueules*), the heraldic word for " red. "

2. *Trick'd* = spotted or smeared, as if heraldically. In heraldry, *to trick* is to indicate colours by certain arrangements of dots and lines.

3. *Impasted* = turned to paste.—*With*, indicating the cause.

4. *Tyrannous*, raging pitilessly: cp. " tyrannically ", 337, and " tyrant, " 478.

5. If (p. 186 n. 6) " *lord's* " is the right interpretation of Q[2]'s *Lords murther*, " *to* " apparently means, as in I, II, 37, for the purpose of (cp. also IV, v, 114). M. Derocquigny has, very ingeniously :

A celui qui se hâte au meurtre de leur maître.

But see his admirably truculent rendering of the whole passage.

6. *O'ersized*, covered all over, as with a kind of size, Fr. " *colle.* " —*Coagulate* (Lat. *coagulatus*; cp. *prenominate*, II, I, 43) = coagulated. —*Gore* is coagulated blood, shed in slaughter.

7. *Carbuncle* (Fr. : *escarboucle*) was the medieval, and post-medieval, name, not only of the ruby, but of a mythic stone that, as a writer tells us in 1567, " giveth light... especially in the night season. "

8. *Grandsire*, more solemn and reverential than " grandfather " simply.

9. *So*, now that I have done my part.

10. *Discretion* (cp. I, II, 5) recalls, partly at least, " modesty " in 438.

11. *Anon* = soon.

12. *Antique*, always accented on the first in Sh. (as it still was sometimes, in verse, throughout the XIXth century).

13. *Unequal* (I, III, 116), with one not his equal.

Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide[1]; 470
But with[2] the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls[3]. Then senseless Ilium[4],
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his[5] base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd in the air to stick :
So, as a painted tyrant[6], Pyrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to[7] his will and matter[8],
Did nothing. 480
But, as we often see against[9] some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack[10] stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb[11] below
As hush[12] as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region[13]; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work[14];
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne[15],
With less remorse[16] than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. 490

1. *Drives* a blow.—*Wide* of his aim, far from it.

2. *With*, as in 457.

3. *Unnerved*, whose nerves (= muscles; cp. I, iv, 83) have lost all vigour.—*Father* : old man, not without some suggestion of what Priam himself pleads, when imploring Pyrrhus for pity, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* : " Father of fifty sons, but they are slain " (l. 529); see Appendix *F*.

4. *Senseless Ilium* : Ilium (with both *i*'s short, as indicated by the spelling " Illium " F), the royal palace (as in *Troilus and Cressida*), though incapable of " *feeling.* "

5. *His*, I, i, 37.

6. *Tyrant*; the main idea is one of raging lawless cruelty, such as Macbeth's for instance.

7. *A neutral*, one indifferent.

8. *Matter* : object, purpose.

9. *Against* : just before, with a fine suggestion of preparation for, as still in modern usage; cp. p. 14 n. 1.

10. *The rack*, clouds driven before the wind in the upper air.

11. *The orb* = the earth

12. *Hush*; an adjectival use, not peculiar to Sh.

13. *Region*, space of sky, of air.

14. *New*, used adverbially = anew, afresh.—*A-work* = at work.

15. *Proof*, resisting power; *eterne* (Old French " *eterne*, " still used by Ronsard) = eternal.

16. *Remorse* = compassion, a meaning not uncommon in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries.

Out, out[1], thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod[2], take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies[3] from her wheel,
And bowl[4] the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!' 495

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall[5] to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry[6], or he sleeps. Say on; come to Hecuba.

First Pl. 'But who, O, who had seen the mobled[7] queen—' 500

Ham. 'The mobled queen!'

Pol. That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Pl. 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum[8]; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,[9] 505
About her lank and all o'er-teemed[10] loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up:
Who this had[11] seen, with tongue in venom [steep'd

1. *Out*, an exclamation of indignant abhorrence.

2. *Synod*, used by Shakespeare more than once, of the assembly of the gods.

3. *The spokes* are the rays, inserted in the *nave*, at the centre, and, at their other end, in the *fellies*, which form the rim of the wheel.

4. *Bowl*, send it rolling, as in a game at bowls (cp. p. 65 n. 5).

5. *It shall*, we will send it.

6. *Jig* here, as in III, II, 111, means the kind of rhymed farce sung and danced, to ballad measure, after the play itself, by the clown and generally one or two other performers.—*Bawdry*, a very coarse synonym of obscene licentiousness.

7. *Mobile* (with *o* short, as the alternative spelling "*mobble*" indicates), now dialectal e. g. in Sh.'s. native county) and then, it seems, old. fashioned (502) or familiar = muffle up.

8. *Bisson* (used by Shakespeare in one other passage, of humorous prose, *Coriolanus*, II, I, 70) was an archaic synonym of blind, and here means blinding.—*Rheum* = flow of tears, that might drown "the flames." Cp. IV, VII, 191-2.

9. *Robe* of state; cp. "the diadem."

10. *All*: altogether, quite.—*O'er-teemed* = having borne too many children (fifty sons and fifty daughters was the legendary number), exhausted by child-bearing.

11. *Had*, should have.

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd[1]:
But[2] if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport[3]
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs[4],
The instant[5] burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven[6]
And passion in the gods[7].'

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his[8] colour and has tears in his eyes. Prithee, no more[9].

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out[10] the rest of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed[11]? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstract[12] and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better[13] have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodykins[14], man, much better! Use every

1. Would have *pronounced*, judicially declared, the power of Fortune (the stately "Strumpet") to be guilty of *treason*' (more definite than "treachery; cp. IV, v, 114). With *state*, here, cp. e. g. *Richard II*, IV, 1, 252, "Proud majesty (made) a subject; state, a peasant."

2. *But*, announcing the climax, Olympus-high.

3. *She*, stressed —*Malicious*, intensely bent on doing harm.

4. In the *Tragedy*, Pyrrhus "rips" old Priam "from the navel to the throat at once," dips Achilles' flag in the "chill cold blood," and runs out thus in triumph (l. 550-55).

5. *Instant* – instantaneous.

6. *Milch*. N. E. D. has one instance of the word as an adjective meaning "giving milk," (apart' from such still current phrases as e. g. "milch-cow), in a text of the time: here, apparently, "shedding milk-like tears." Cp. the famous phrase in *Macbeth* (I, v, 18), "the milk of human kindness."—*Eyes of heaven*, the stars, which "are fire," 116

7. *Passion... gods*: caused in the gods intense compassion. Cp. "passion" = sorrowful emotion, IV, v, 179.

8. *His* would now be dropped.

9. *Has*, more vivacious and emphatic than the logical "has not" could be.—*No more*, a trait of superficial, senile sensibility.

10. *Out*: to the end.

11. *Bestowed* = lodged.

12. *Abstract* = epitome.

13. *You... better* = it were (i. e. would be) better for you to.

14. *Bodykins*, endearing di-

man after his desert, and who shall scape whipping[1]? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty[2]. Take them in.[3] 531

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play tomorrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*] Dost thou hear me[4], old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago? 536

First Pl. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll have it[5] to-morrow night. You could, for a[6] need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in it, could you not? 541

First Pl. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not[7]. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends[8], I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord. 546

minutive of "body." As regards the original reference, cp. note on "Sblood," 363; F, however, lets *this* bit of "profanity" stand.

1. *Whipping* may have been suggested by the Act of Parliament that, in 1571, made this the punishment for unlicensed players as well as for vagrants and "sturdy beggars." For the thought, cp., note 6 p. 81, and of course III, 1. 128. *Clarendon* quotes "deal not with us after our offences," in the Liturgy of the Church of England, to illustrate "*after* (i. e. according to) his desert;" and the similarity is not one of phrasing only.—*Scape*, p. 34 n. 11.

2. *Bounty*, liberality.

3. *In*; they will presently disappear "within," I, v, 113; cp. *ibid.* 151 n.

4. *Dost.... me*: isten, as in 521.—The two spies hear nothing of what the First Player is asked and told. Even what just precedes was spoken at some distance from them; see III, 1, 20 and cp. p. 78 n. 5.

5. *Have it.* As in the parallel passage, IV, VII, 156, F prints *ha't* (Q^2, *hate*), one of the "vulgarisms" denounced by Mr. A. Bayfield.

6. *For a*=at a, in case of.

7. *Follow.... not*, though he is sure to give you cause and my example might tempt you to do so. But he *is* a "lord." That the sentence should make a line of blank verse, cheap but quite correct, is part of the joke.—*Look*=take care.

8. *My good friends*, stressed with secret irony.

Ham. Ay, so, God be with ye[1].
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*
Now I am alone.
Oh what a rogue and peasant slave[2] am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion[3],
Could force his soul so to his own conceit[4]
That from her working all his visage wann'd[5];
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect[6],
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting[7]
With[8] forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue[9] for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general[10] ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free[11],
Confound the ignorant, and amaze[12] indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak[13],

1. With 546-7 cp. p. 27 n. 6; p. 64 n. 8.

2. *Rogue,* a XVIth century word, first used of idle vagabonds, deserving the whip (p. 99 n. 1).—Some *peasant-slaves,* "bondmen," there appear to have been still in England; "slave" is, in any case, strongly stressed.

3. *Passion*; cp. 516.

4. *To... conceit,* to feel in unison with what was a mere conception, imagination, of his own.

5. *Her working,* his soul's action.—*Wann'd* : turned wan, pallid.

6. *Aspect,* always accented on the second in Sh. (as in Milton and some later poets).—*His* (Q^2); F cripples it into *'s*; cp. Introd. p. XXI. n. 8.

7. *Function*=activity, "action," gestures and bearing.—*Suiting*=adapting itself.

8. *With,* by means of.

9. *Cue,* a technical stage term, the signal for an actor that his turn had come to speak.

10. *General*=public.

11. *Free* from guilt, innocent, as in III, II, 229.

12. *Amaze*; a word of even greater force then than now; cp. *amazement,* III, IV, 111.

13. *Dull* and *muddy* recall the Ghost's words in I, V 32-33.—*Peak* =move about dejectedly.

Like John-a-dreams[1], unpregnant of[2] my cause,
And can say[3] nothing : no, not for a king,
Upon whose property[4] and most dear life
A damn'd defeat[5] was made. Am I a coward[6]?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate[7] across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks[8] me by the nose? gives me the lie in the throat[9]
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Hah[10]?
'Swounds, I should take[11] it : for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall[12]
To make oppression bitter[13], or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites[14]

1. *John-a-dreams*, one lost in idle dreams (with "*a*" = of; p. xxi, n. 8).

2. *Unpregnant of* : not impregnated with, and quickened to action by.

3. *Say*. That the *deed* which must follow should not be *explicity* present to Hamlet's mind, may not be without significance.

4. *Property*, i. e. whatever and whoever was his, crown *and* queen; an assimilation that, however repugnant to advanced modern feeling, seems the natural interpretation. Cp. III, III, 55.

5. *Defeat*, destructive attack (cp. V, II, 58). *N. E. D.* records similar phrases in the first half of the XVIIth century and observes that, in Sh., *to defeat* never means to vanquish only.

6. *Coward*; cp. IV, IV, 43 and note.

7. *Pate*, though originally not contemptuous (cp. p. 225 n. 5), is obviously here, as in III, II, 9, and V, I, 78, 107, more than familiar for "skull."

8. *Tweaks*, pinches and pulls with a jerk.

9. *Gives... throat*, declares that words of mine are a lie and that he will force them back down my throat.

10. *Hah?* (the spelling is Q^2 's; as to the stopping, which is F.'s, cp. note on I, v, 95), uttered in furiously explosive defiance of the imaginary insulter. Hamlet has lashed himself nearer to action than he was at l. 565; but, after a few seconds, relapses into that disgust with himself (cp. "*foh!*" l. 589) which is part of his disgust with the world. Metrically, the effect *in vacuo* is here at its loudest; cp. 556, 565, 582, 588.

11. *'Swounds*, contracted from God's (i. e. Christ's) wounds (cp. "'Sblood," p. 88 n. 11, and "God's bodykins," 527), a profane exclamation for which F. substituted "*Why.*"—*Take* : accept.

12. The "*liver*" often figures in Sh. as the seat of passion; and "*pigeons*," like doves, were supposed to secrete no "*gall.*"

13. *Bitter*, taste bitter to me.

14. *Region* (485); for the possessive force, cp. p. 41 n. 3.—*Kites*. Of kites (in French, "*milans*"), true inhabitants of the air, where they sometimes keep at such a height as to be invisible to man —without losing sight themselves

With this slave's offal[1] : bloody, bawdy[2] villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain[3]!
Oh vengeance[4]!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave[5],
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell[6],
Must, like a whore[7], unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing[8], like a very drab,
A scullion![9]
Fie upon't! foh[10]! About[11], my brain! Hum[12], I have heard
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning[13] of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently[14]

of possible prey, or garbage, on the ground—Buffon wrote as "*oiseaux ignobles* (which is also to the point here), *immondes et lâches.*"

1. *This slave's offal*, the carrion of "this slave" (who calls himself king) good only to "*fat*" kites.

2. *Bawdy*, a very coarse synonym of dissolute. The "adulterate beast" (I, v, 42) has made the royal bed of Denmark a couch for incestuous lust (82-83).

3. *Remorseless* cp. 489.—*Kindless* (from the substantive "kind," in the then common meaning of "natural disposition"), unnatural (cp. p. 19 n. 5).—The denunciatory epithets almost reverberate each other.

4. The word is out; and, in imagination, Hamlet now stands on the point of taking vengeance on no imaginary enemy. But it is in imagination only; and self-condemnation follows at once again, though not so blind as in l. 576.

5. *Is*, ironically stressed.—*Brave*: p. 84 n. 7 (though the current of thought in 570 ff. may have subconsciously suggested the word).

6. *Hell*; cp. note on I, v, 93.

7. *Whore*, the most violent name for a prostitute.

8. *Fall a-*: Fr. *me mettre* à.—*Very*: true, mere.

9. *Scullion*, perhaps an alteration of the French "*souillon.*"

10. *Foh!* like its modern equivalent, "faugh!", expresses nauseating disgust.

11. *About*: set to work. But had not his brain been at work, just before (535-43), in the same direction and with much more definite results? The "something" of l. 596 is vague; and the insertion to be made (which we should expect to be the point) is *not* clearly alluded to. Can it be that, when Sh. penned this, he had not yet thought of 538-41, possibly not even of 535-8, and that he afterwards forgot to alter the present passage in consequence (J. M. Robertson)?

12. *Hum* (not in F, and the rejection of which allows a regularising, whether appropriate or not, of the metre) is given by Q^2, which, to all appearance, had for it, at least, the authority of the great Richard Burbage, p. 26 n. 2.

13. *Cunning*, 439.

14. *Presently*, 171.

They have proclaim'd their malefactions[1];
For murder, though it have no tongue, will[2] speak
With most miraculous[3] organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick[4] : if he but blench[5],
I know my course[6]. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil[7] : and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits[5],
Abuses me to damn me[9] : I'll have grounds

1. *Malefactions* (cp. e. g. "probation," I, 1, 155). More than one spectator probably would think of the passage in an older play, *A Warning for Fair Women* (pub. 1599), that told how, at a performance given, at King's Lynn (Norfolk), by a company "travelling that way," a woman had been moved to "proclaim" that she was her husband's murderess.

2. *Will*, I, II, 256.

3. *Miraculous*, notably that of the murderer himself, who has the strongest reasons for silence—Reading the line naturally (i. e. expressively) will give the scansion (as in most cases; see, though, e. g. III, 1, 2).

4. *Tent*. A tent is a probe (Fr. "*sonde*") for exploring a wound; "to tent," to probe.—*Quick* = Fr. "*vif*."—Can the allusion be to *the* "speech"? Cp. n. 11 p. 102.

5. *Blench* = flinch.

6. *My course*, what course of action must be mine.

7. *May be the* ("a" Q^2) *devil*. A possibility fully recognised by the theology of those days, the Protestant even more than the unreformed. In discussing the degree of *reality* (which is more than the sincerity at the moment) of this reason for delay, it seems wise to remember that a varying degree of doubt, when some supernatural experience is past, is a normal reaction (abundantly illustrated, indeed, in literature). The absence of any hint of the kind in 567, is easily accounted for by the drift of Hamlet's thoughts then and their vehemence.—*Devil* is, here, uttered with more deliberate emphasis than after the pause, when the tone will be that of *comparatively* rapid, because unquestioned, affirmation.

8. Potent in using such spirits as that which I have seen (Verity, who argues that "*spirit*" could hardly be used in two different senses at an interval of four lines). But Sh. well might overlook this; and it seems more difficult not to consider 603 as a psycho-theological explanation of 602, meaning that the devil has great power over the spirits of men weakened by melancholy. Q^1 actually has *men*.

9. *Abuse* (like "illude" e. g. in King James's *Daemonology*) = delude, deceive.—*Damn me*; cp. "I believe that these apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting

More relative than this[1]. The play's the thing 605
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit.*

ACT III[2].

Scene I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, *and* Guildenstern.

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance[3],
Get from him why he puts on this confusion[4],
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet[5]
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?
Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted[6]; 5
But from what cause he will by no means speak[7].
Guil. Nor do we find him forward[8] to be sounded,

us unto mischief, blood, and villainy" (Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, pub. 1642, I, sect. 37).

1. *Relative*, pertinent, demonstrative—*This*; we should rather expect "that". Irving, the most famous Shakespearean actor in England in the last quarter of the XIXth century, took out his "tablets" before "*I'll have*" and pointed to what he had written on them (I, v, 110), when he came to "*this.*" (See, however, p. 4, n. 9).

2. *Act III*, after a night's interval. Cp. "to-morrow" in II, II, 519 and "this night" un l. 21 of "*this*". Cp. however p. 4 n. 9.

3. *Drift of circumstance* inevitably recalls Polonius's "encompassment and drift of question" in II, I, 10; and no doubt the same roundabout method is meant.—*Circumstances* is thus used in III, II, 48, of the *Spanish Tragedy*; and the present passage would probably have been quoted among the proofs of Kyd's authorship of the first *Hamlet*, if it was given by Q^1.

4. Read naturally, this line hardly makes verse; cp. the rather inexpressively uncertain prosody of 22-25. F. is, in this respect, not much better than Q^2; and Q^1 is too different in form to suggest emendation of any sort.—*Confusion* of mind.—*Puts on*; cp. note on *crafty madness*, l. 8.

5. *Grating*, transitive; *harshly*, with rough discordance (cp. 158).—*Of quiet*, that might be days of unruffled quiet.

6. *Distracted* I, v, 97; cp. IV, v. 2.

7. *Speak*—say.

8. *Forward*, willing to make the first steps.

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof[1],
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.
Queen. Did he receive you well?
Ros. Most like a gentleman.
Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition[2].
Ros. Niggard of question[3], but of our demands
Most free in his reply.
Queen. Did you assay him[4]
To any pastime?
Ros. Madam, it so fell out[5], that certain players
We o'er-raught[6] on the way: of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about[7] the court,
And, as I think[8], they have already order
This night to play before him.
Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me[9] to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.
King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge[10],

1. *A crafty madness* comes dangerously near to Hamlet's "*mad in craft*" (III, IV, 185); cp. "true state" in l. 10.—*Keeps aloof*, much like "puts us off" in Q[1]. The omission of the nominative pronoun causes no obscurity; cp. IV, I, 9.

2. Possibly intended to anticipate the question, "how did you get so little from him then?"

3. *Niggard of question*, it seems most natural to interpret as corroborating l. 12 (with *question* apparently in the sense of starting and keeping up conversation). That the account thus given of the interview should be the reverse of the truth, is no difficulty.—The next "*of*," largely due, it seems, to the attraction of this one, appears to mean, like it, "as regards".

4. *Assay him to* = make trial of him by tempting him to.

5. *Fell out*, chanced.

6. *O'er-raught* (= overreached) = overtook, "coted", II, II, 315.

7. *About*, somewhere in.

8. *As I think*. Cp. p. 99 n. 4.

9. *Beseech'd*, then correct; *me*, unstressed.

10. *Give him a further edge*: make his inclination sharper still.—Cp. "to whet the appetite."

And drive his purpose on to[1] these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

King, Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely[2] sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here[3]
Affront[4] Ophelia :
Her father and myself, lawful espials[5],
Will so bestow[6] ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly[7] judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd[8],
If it be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for[9].

Queen. I shall obey you[10].
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be[11] the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness[12] : so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may[13].

[*Exit Queen.*

1. *Drive his purpose on to* = stimulate his pursuit of.

2. *Closely* = covertly, secretly.

3. *Here,* after " hither, " seems very cheap padding. Cp. note on I. 2.

4. *Affront* : find himself face to face with, " *encounter* ", 33. The gap in prosody may indicate that Claudius now turns to Gertrude's ear. Ophelia, in any case, will show herself (1S2-3) innocent of complicity in the eavesdropping (of which her father makes *no* secret to her in the corresponding part of Q[1]).

5. *Espials,* then a synonym of " spies, " over which it has the advantage of suggesting, by its comparative rarity, formal " lawfulness ", of legalising the act, as it were.

6. *Bestow* = place. Cp. II, II, 521.

7. *Frankly,* = without hindrance (because without concealment on *their* part).

8. *By him... behaved* : by means of, or from, his behaviour.

9. *For* = from.

10. *Shall,* gently stressed, expressing the certainty of obedience, as in loving duty bound. There is caressing humility also in the unstressed " *you,* " technically a " feminine ending. "

11. *Good* : virtuous, as explained in 40-42.—*Beauties,* a rather heavy plural; cp. however, " virtues. "—*Be,* II, II, 378.

12. *Wildness* : disorder of mind.

13. With *honours,* cp. e. g. "loves", I, I, 173.—*It* is indefinite, as modesty demanded.

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves[1]. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this [book[2];
That show of such an exercise may colour[3] 45
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much prov'd[4]—that with devotion's visage
And pious action[5], we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.
King. [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied[6] with plastering art, 51
Is not more ugly to[7] the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word[8]:
O heavy burthen!
Pol. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord. 55
[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be[9]: that is the question:

1. *Gracious... ourselves*, aside to the King; cp. note on 31—"Gracious" merely has about it a shade of intimacy that "my gracious lord" or "gracious my lord" would have lacked.

2. *On.* The fact that bending her eyes on some page, not reading *in* it really, is the point, may have influenced the choice of the preposition. Elze, however, aptly quotes from the *Spanish Tragedy*, III, VII, 31, "I read on this"=I read this (letter). Cp. stage-direction, II, II, 168, and p. 204 n. 2.—*Book* of devotions (47-49; 89).

3. *Show.* This omission of the indefinite article appears to have been getting archaic by Sh.'s time, when the meaning was not collective.—*Exercise*; cp. e. g. "'exercise devout" in *Othello*, III, IV 41. — *Colour*, p. 83 n. 11.

4. *Proved* by experience.

5. *Action*, in the sense of I, II, 84.

6. *Beautied* (not special to Sh., but not common, it seems, even then)= beautified (not as in II, II, 110).

7. *To*=compared to.

8. *Most painted*: in which the reality is, like "the harlot's cheek," so thickly "plastered" over with paint.—*Word*, collective, the singular being due to the attraction of *deed*, the crimes of Claudius forming one whole.—That he should so plainly realise their "ugliness" and so sharply feel the "lash" of "conscience", but not would edify, surprise, Sh's audience.

9. To live on, or to put an end to one's life. Two acts earlier, a younger. (Ap. *K*) and orthodox Hamlet (cp.

Whether 'tis nobler in[1] the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles[2],
And by opposing end them? To die : to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache[3] and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation[4]
Devoutly[5] to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep : perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub[6];
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil[7],
Must give us pause : there's the respect[8]
That makes calamity of so long life;[9]
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time[10],
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely[11],
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay[12],

note on 80) had "devoutly wished" that "the Everlasting had not fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter" (I, II, 131-132).

1. *In*, on the part of (unless we are to construe, less naturally, with Dowden, "to suffer in the mind" i. e. in the secrecy of one's soul, passively, so far as outward "opposition" is concerned.)

2. See Appendix *G*.

3. *Heart-ache*, chiefly at wrong that must be suffered, l. 70-74.

4. *Consummation*, here, seems to mean not simply end total (death, as in the dirge in *Cymbeline*, IV, II, 280; annihilation, as in a passage of Florio (1603), where it renders Montaigne's "*anéantissement*"), but end that is a fitting fulfilment of desires.

5. *Devoutly*, fervently.

6. *Rub* was the name given, in the game of bowls (cp. II, I, 64), to whatever hindered or deflected (87) a bowl in its course.

7. *Mortal coil* = turmoil (as in the eleven other places where the word occurs in Sh.) of mortality, with some suggestion, *perhaps* (after "*shuffle off*"), of entanglement as in a "*coil*" of rope; but this appears to have been then an exclusively nautical term.

8. *Respect* = "regard", 87, consideration.—The scansion of the line seems emphatically to illustrate the possible (and natural) value of a "pause."

9. *Calamity* i. e. the man who has to bear it; *of so long life*, consent to live so long.

10. *Time* = the time or times, the world.

11. *Contumely* (accented on the first, as now) has an effect of audible turgidity.

12. *Despis'd*, Q^2 (for the place of the accent compare note on I, IV, 52), is "*dispriz'd*" (= Old French "*desprisé*"; Modern French "*méprisé*") in F.—*The law's delay*; Claudius, in his great soliloquy of Act III, sc. III, will say worse (l. 39-60). As regards Sh's interest in legal matters cp. p. 213 n. 3.

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes[1],
When he himself might his quietus[2] make
With a bare bodkin[3]? who would fardels bear[4],
To grunt[5] and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread[6] of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn[7]
No traveller returns[8], puzzles[9] the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience[10] does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native[11] hue of resolution

1. *Of*, p. 85 n. 7.—*Takes*, accepts, dares not resist, as in II, II, 576.

2. *Quietus* (short for the law Latin phrase "*quietus est*"): French "*quitus.*"

3. *Bare*, might, only too obviously, mean unsheathed. But the drift of the whole speech suggests rather the sense of "mere," i. e. "*trois pouces de fer*," as in Paul Meurice's final version of the play (1886). A *bodkin is* called a "pocket dagger, a stiletto" in a play of Beaumont and Fletcher; and the second syllable gives the word the appearance at least of being a diminutive.

4. *Fardels* (the old French form of the word) = burdens.

5. *Grunt* (though sometimes used, then, with no debasing intention, where we should say "groan") helps, here, to suggest a *beast* of burden.

6. *Dread.* "But for a *hope* of something after death" had been one clear theme of the vilely mangled soliloquy that, in Q[1], corresponded to this—though, being eminently detachable, (cp. note on 80), suggested, in fact, to Hamlet by a book on which he was "poring" as he entered (cp. II, II, 169), it occurred, like the following interview with Ophelia, *before* the Players' arrival. Cp. p. XVI n.

7. *Bourn* (spelt, as in French "borne" in Q[2] and F), limit.

8. *No traveller returns.*—To reconcile this with Act I especially, it has been supposed e. g. either that Hamlet does not mean quite what he very plainly says, or that he, at the moment, does not "*remember*," or again, more plausibly, that his doubts of I, II, 582-587 have temporarily sharpened into sheer negation. More probably, it seems, Sh. finding in the old play a soliloquy unconnected with the action (cp. note on 78) and on a tempting theme, let himself go—though *in character*, for everything here is in the vein of (if one may use the phrase) the *essential* Hamlet without troubling about the limitations imposed by the plot on the range of thought of the hero.

9. *Puzzles*, perplexes.

10. *Conscience*, from what follows, seems to mean (cp. Bradley, p. 98) intimate conscious ness of possible consequences (cp. "*some craven scruple of thinking too precisely on the event*," in IV, IV, 41); which would be a development of a sense recorded in *N. E. D.* "inmost thought."

11. *Native*, natural.

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought[1],
And enterprises of great pitch and moment[2]
With this regard[3] their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action[4]. Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia[5]? Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd[6].

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day[7]?

Ham[8]. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances[9] of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught[10].

1. *Sicklied o'er*, made sickly all over.—*With*; p. 95 n. 3.—*Cast*: dash (= shade) of colour, tinge.—*Thought*, then, often meant sad, anxious, thought; cp. in this act, sc. IV, 51; in the next, sc. V, 169. "How many considerable ones we have lost, is no little *thought of heart* to us," Cromwell wrote, in 1649, from Ireland.

2. *Pitch*, strictly, the height to which a falcon, for example, soars before swooping down upon its prey.—*Moment*, weight, in the sense of importance.

3. *With*, as in l. 85; *regard* = consideration.

4. *The name of action*, to which they would have attained otherwise.—Tempting as it is to apply this to Hamlet himself, the whole generalising character of the speech, accentuated by such details as the plurals in 86-87, indicates that he does not do so now.

5. *Soft* = softly (cp. French "*Tout doux!*)"; and *you* is addressed to himself.—*The fair Ophelia?* As regards the question-mark, expressive here, of course, of surprise only, the textual evidence is precisely the same as in II, II, 421). The phrase is too smooth to sound like the utterance of a man in "the pangs of despised love" (72); and Hamlet is speaking to himself, not acting indifference. —*Nymph*, in a mocking vein of affected gallantry, will be said as if he did not know her.

6. *Be*, optative.—*All my sins*; the idea, the obsession almost, of ineradicable sin (117-8), dominates the whole interview and, indeed, overclouds how much of Hamlet's soul

7. *This many a day*. His "mad" appearance and behaviour to her only the day before (II, I, 77-100); it is elementary kindness to ignore.

8. *Hamlet*, still pretending not to recognise her, as he will go on doing down to l. 114. The repetition of *well* not only emphasizes this seeming unconsciousness of his real condition but may be intended to pass for half-morbidly mechanical.—As for *humbly*, cp. V, II 83.

9. *Remembrances* = souvenirs.

10. Hamlet's denial should be it seems, the enigmatic expression

Oph. My honour'd lord, you[1] know right well you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As[2] made the things more rich: their perfume[3] lost,
Take these again[4]; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind[5].
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest[6]?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to[7] your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?[8]

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will[9] sooner transform honesty from what it is[10] than the force of honesty can translate[11] beauty into his likeness: this was sometime[12] a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.[13] I did love you once[14].

of some truth; but which? Might it be that not the real Hamlet but one who did not know himself, *was not* himself, gave them to a no less unreal Ophelia, the Ophelia of his dreams?

1. *You know*; F has "I know," which, if one *very gently* stresses the pronoun ("*I* well remember, though *you* do not"), seems the finer reading.

2. *So... as*=such... that.

3. *Perfume* was implied in *sweet* (with a closely associated meaning of which compare l. 159).

4. *Again*=back.

5. So little did the Elizabethans object to the dogmatic turn of the sentiment that its aphoristic character is still emphasized by rhyme.

6. *Ha ha!* cuts short the awkward affair of the "remembrances" offered back, and sounds the offensive with sarcastic violence.—*Honest,* virtuous, in the sense of chaste.

7. *Discourse to* = familiar intercourse with (*O.*; (cp. "*Discours* [c] Propos de conversation, d'entretien", Littré), such as mine with you at present (much less the "rich gifts" of 101).

8. Ophelia apparently has understood: "your honesty should allow *itself* no *commerce* (i. e. intercourse) *with* your beauty."

9. *Will*, almost as a matter of course (cp. I, II, 257, and contrast, next line but one, *can*).

10. *From what it is* to=a corrupter of, and trafficker in, "beauty".

11. *Translate*=transform.

12. *Sometime* (cp. I, II, 8), in the "good old times" that so many satirists, both before Hamlet and since, have contrasted with their own.

13. *The time* (=these times) proves it.

14. *I.. once*; spoken "in gloomy

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it[1] : I loved you not[2].

Oph. I was the more deceived. 120

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery[3] : why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?[4] I am myself indifferent honest; but yet[5] I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me : I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious[6]; with more offences at my beck[7] than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father[8]? 131

recognition of a now incomprehensible fact " (D. Mac Carthy, criticizing the still tenderly loving Hamlet of the dominant modern interpretation). Cp. 162, spoken by one not easily deceived.

1. *Inoculate*, engraft.—*Stock*, stem in which a graft is inserted.—*But we shall*, that we shall not.—*Relish of it*, have a flavour, a taste, of the " old stock. " Hamlet means more particularly that he cannot help being his mother's son; but the thought, as his next speech will show, is of most general application.

2. Being of a *stock* incapable of true *love*.

3. *Get thee to*, a very familiar phrase (cp. I, I, 7) : seek refuge in.—*Nunnery*, where no perilous " discourse " shall be " admitted to your beauty " (108).

4. *Sinners* (cp. p. 110 n. 6.). Do not millions of Christians, in their daily prayers, confess themselves to be, in the words of one of the Church of England litanies, " miserable sinners "?

5. *But yet*; cp. I, v, 12 and 76; p. 99. n. 1; and, in *Macbeth*, IV, III, 224, Macduff, who surely seems more than " *indifferent* (= middling, passably; II, II, 227) *honest*, " crying out that the murder of his wife and children was a punishment on his sins, " naught " (cp. note on IV, II, 29) that he was.

6. *Very... ambitious*. The " very " is a palpable exaggeration (a bitter one as regards revengefulness); the only vices actually named are those of which Hamlet knows that he is suspected; and it has been thought, in consequence, that the whole speech is ironical. Other critics, more closely observant perhaps of the secret movements of the soul, more penetrated, at least, it seems, with the whole moral atmosphere of the play, take l. 122-129 as intended to cast a fiercely magnifying light on one aspect of the truth about the heart of man.—As regards ambition, cp. p. 27n. 2, III, II, 323-7, and V, II, 65.

7. *At my beck*, ready to come at the slightest sign from me.

8. *Ways*, p. 41, n. 4.—*Father?* The

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in his own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens! 135

Ham[1]. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry : be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery go : farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them.[2] To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell. 142

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name[3] God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance[4]. Go to, I'll no more of it[5]; it hath made me mad[6]. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already,

supposition that H. has just caught *him*, at least, peeping seems irreconcilable e. g. with 147-8 and absence of suspiciousness in III. iv. 9-31. The daughter's presence may naturally recall the father; and jeering at him is a temptation that Hamlet cannot resist.

1. *Hamlet*, coming back to her, as he will do twice again after having bidden her "farewell"; fulminating, each time, with increasing violence.

2. Superficially (transparently for us), Hamlet is *acting* the madman; but need this make his denunciations mere devices to scare Ophelia with satire palatable to the audience?

3. *Jig*, affect suddenness and liveliness of movement, much as if you were dancing a "jig," or, on the contrary, *amble*, act the "wanton ambling nymph" (*Richard III*, I, i, 17), walk as if you were dancing softly. *Lisp*, affect childish imperfections in the articulation of certain letters, for you pretend to be *such* babies! *Nick-name*, alluding probably to pet names that are not merely ridiculous but (consciously, n. 4) worse.

4. *Make... ignorance*, use "wanton" (i. e. immodest) words and phrases, pretending childlike ignorance of their immodest meaning.

5. *Go to* (cp. I, III, 112), expressive, here, of scornful condemnation.—*I'll* = I will have.—*Of it* (Q^1): Q^2 and F print *on't*; (cp. p. 215 n. 6.

6. *It... mad.* This no madman would say, of course; but sickening horror at woman's "frailty" is in truth the deepest source of the maddening tumult in his soul.

all but one[1], shall live; the rest shall keep as they are.
To a nunnery, go. [*Exit.*

Oph. O, what a noble[2] mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye[3], tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state[4],
The glass of fashion and the mould of form[5],
The observ'd of[6] all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject[7] and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows[8],
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown[9] youth
Blasted[10] with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see! [*Exit.*[11]

Re-enter KING *and* POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections[12] do not that way tend;

1. *All but one.* To Ophelia, who, in her naïveté, thinks it all mere madness, the exception is unintelligible; and Dowden, for instance, regards this as "a shaft meant to strike the eaves-dropping king". But would Hamlet risk the threat (*and warning*) if he knew that even her foolish father overheard it? Cp. note on 130.—*Shall*, for such is "our will;" cp. the deliberately full and solemn *we will have* of 149; after the impetuously swift *I'll* of 148.

2. *Noble*, of high excellence.

3. *Eye*: look, manners.

4. *The fair state*: the state *made* fair by such a flower.

5. The mirror that "fashion" would consult, and the "mould" into which whoever aimed at perfect "form" would endeavour to cast himself.

6. *Observ'd of* = looked up to by. —*Observers*, those who note and endeavour to imitate superior "gentry", V, II, 111.

7. *Deject*, with "ed" dropped, partly under Latin influence; cp. I, II, 20 n.

8. *Music vows*, vows that to me were music.

9. *Unmatch'd*, that never could or can be matched.—*Feature* = shape (one of the senses of the Old French *faiture*).—*Blown*: in full bloom.

10. *Blasted*; cp. "blastments" I, III, 42.—*Ecstasy*; see II, I, 101.

11. *Exit* (both in Q^1 and Q^2; also in Q^4 and Q^5); and it does seem most natural to suppose that, after her soliloquy, Ophelia goes to seek her father and tell him what the interview has been. At l. 181 she must then re-enter, as his "*How now!*" indicates.

12. *Affections* has, here, one of the Latin senses of the word, inclination, disposition of mind or soul. As for the opinion expressed, there

Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not[1] like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood[2];
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose[3]
Will be some danger: which for to[4] prevent,
I have in quick determination[5]
Thus set it down[6]: he shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute[7]:
Haply[8] the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel[9]
This something-settled[10] matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself[11]. What think you on it[12]?

Pol. It shall[13] do well: but yet do I believe
The origin[14] and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all[15]. My lord, do as you please;

is as little reason to question its rightness as to doubt the penetration of the remarks that immediately follow.

1. *Nor what... was not* (Cp. I, II 158) = nor was what....

2. *On brood* = brooding.

3. *Doubt*, I, II, 256.—*The hatch and the disclose* = what will thus be hatched and disclosed (= Old French "*desclos*", like "esclos," Mod. French, "éclos"). Cp. V, I, 289.

4. *For to* = in order to. *For* is modernisingly dropped, without regard to the metre, by F (which, in I, II, 175, had already rejected the more definitely archaic "*for to drink*", but felicitously replaced it by "*to drink deep*").

5. *Determination.* Cp e. g. "malefactions," II, II, 593, also, for fulness of enunciation, "*variable*" in 175.

6. *Set it down* = settled it.—*Shall... to*; cp. e. g. II, II, 497.

7. *Tribute*; p. 171 n. 1 and 2.

8. *Haply* = perhaps.

9. *Variable* (4 wavy syllables), various; cp. IV, III, 24.—*Shall*, against his will.

10. *Something-settled.* The hyphen (not in any of the old editions, which print the two words quite separately) implies the usual interpretation, which (making "*something*" = "somewhat, to some extent," as e. g. in I, III, 121) is in full accord with the context, and puts no strain on the construction.

11. *Puts* (singular, agreeing with the idea of the *action* of the brains) *him from fashion of himself* = transforms him; cp. p. 68 n. 6.

12. *On* (cp. I, II, 6; also p. 113 n. 5.

13. *Shall* = is sure to.

14. *Origin*, with the first not only accented but emphasized.

15. Some editors insert a dash before, "*how now*" (cp. note 11.

But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief [1] : let her be round [2] with him;
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear [3]
Of all their conference. If she find him not [4],
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall [5] think.

King. It shall be so :
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. *A hall in the castle.*

Enter Hamlet *and three of the* Players [6].

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I [7] pronounced it to you, trippingly [8] on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your [9] players do, I had as lief [10] the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently [11];

p. 114) and another after " *heard it all* ". Ophelia is either dismissed or, at least, brushed aside with no pretence of ceremony.

1. *Grief* (Fr. *grief*) = cause of grief.

2. *Round*, II, II, 140; cp. III, IV, 1.

3. *In the ear* = within hearing (by no means the usual meaning).

4. *Find* (subjunctive after " if ") *him* = find him *out*, find out his secret.

5. *Shall*, futurity not to be interfered with.

6. *Players*, Hamlet's very general instructions to whom are partly (see next note) another instance of Shakespeare's way of varying tone and theme at once with greater freedom than would be allowed by later dramatic technique; cp. p. 86 n. 2.

7. *The speech*, II, II, 523-524.—*As I*; one of the touches that can be regarded as coming from an actor playwright, though both the substance and the tone of the criticism will sufficiently fit, if not the circumstances (cp. p. 109 n. 8), at least the general character of the princely and accomplished " observed of all observers. "

8. *Trippingly*, with nimble ease. A warning against the rhetorical delivery implied by the punctuation of F (J. D. Wilson); against metrical clipping (Bayfield).

9. *Your* = whom you and everybody know; cp. I, v, 167.

10. *I had as lief* = would think it as pleasant that.

11. *Nor... not*; cp. e. g. I, II, 158.—*Use* = deal with, manage; *gently*, not with vulgar violence

for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget[1] a temperance that may give it smoothness[2]. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated[3] fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings[4], who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows[5] and noise : I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod[6] : pray you, avoid it.

First Pl. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion[7] be your tutor : suit the action[8] to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty[9] of nature; for any thing so overdone is from[10] the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image[11], and the

1. *Beget* : get by effort (*N. E. D.*).

2. *Temperance*, moderation, self-control.—*Smoothness*; the degree of shapely ease that makes it art (which passion in the rough, uncontrolled passion, is not).

3. *Robustious* (not a rare word then), super-abundantly, tumultuously robust; *periwig-pated*, professionally. For "pate" see p. 101 n. 7.

4. *The groundlings*, "the *understanding* gentlemen of the *ground*" (Ben Jonson); those who, having paid the price for mere admission (a penny a head), heard the play *standing* on the *ground* of the roofless "yard" (= pit; p. 77).

5. *Who are capable of* = whose capacities can comprehend, appreciate. *For the most part* shows some *temperance* in condemnation. As regards *dumb-shows*, see Appendix *H*.

6. *Termagant*, the "Tervagan" on the book of whose Law the Saracen king Marsilies swears in the *Chanson de Roland* (I. 611. "*La lei i fu Mahom et Tervagan*"), was a supposed deity that played a loudly violent part in mediaeval miracle-plays.—*Out-herods Herod*, outdoes, surpasses, in his own famous line of extravagantly loud fury, the King Herod of miracle-plays also. — For *whipped*, cp. p. 99 n. 1.

7. *Discretion*, p. 15 n. 7.

8. *Action*, p. 21 n. 2.

9. *Modesty*, p. 93 n. 9.

10. *Is from* = swerves, turns away from.

11. *Feature*, p. 114 n. 9.—With *scorn* cp. III, i, 70; as to the gender, it is, no doubt, influenced by the parallelism with virtue.

very age and body of the time his form and pressure[1]. Now this overdone, or come tardy off[2], though it make the unskilful laugh[3], cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one[4] must in your allowance[5] o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be[6] players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely[7], that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted[8] and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably[9]. 36

1. *The very... time* = the age itself, the age as it is in truth (cp. II, 1,49), and *the* body (i. e. constitution, as in such phrases as " the social body ") of the time or times.—*His* (referring to " body " rather than " age "), I, I, 37 n.—*Pressure*, I, V, 100.

2. *Or*, on the contrary.—*Come off*: having come off, being carried off (i. e. executed).—*Tardy* = tardily, so that it fails to come up to " nature; " the opposite fault to overshooting the mark, to " nature overdone. "

3. *Make*, subjunctive after " *though*, " as in French after " *quoique*. "—*Unskilful*, undiscerning.—*Laugh*, at a comedy.

4. *Censure* may have the same meaning as in I, III, 69 and presently l. 87.—*The which* = the latter (i. e. " the judicious ").—*One*: even if there be only one such.

5. *Must*, logically.—*Allowance*, generally understood as = acknowledgement (a sense still found in the XVIIIth cent.), so tha " *must in your allowance* " = y u must allow, i. e. acknowledge. A XVIth cent. lexicographer, however, Huloet, has " *estimation* " among the synonyms of " allowance. "

6. *Be* = are, as often then, and coming more " trippingly " on the tongue after " *there*. " Cp. I. 41.

7. *Not... profanely*; to all appearance, an apology for what Hamlet is on the point of saying. The profaneness will consist : either in the mere assertion that such players are, in accent and gait, not " Christians "; or, more forcibly, in fancying that men should have been made by bungling journeymen of nature's, and not by the Creator.

8. *Strutted*. Cp. the " strutting player, " in a passage of *Troilus and Cressida* (I, III, 153-156), thinking it

rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and [sound
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the [scaffoldage. "

9. *Abominably*, printed both in Q^2 and in F (Q^1 has nothing from " *pray you* " down to this " *abhominably*, " the spelling then considered as correct. The derivation received was from the Latin words " *ab homine* " (away from man); which gave the word more point here than it would now have.

First Pl. I hope we have reformed that indifferently[1] with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them[2]: for there be of them[3] that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren[4] spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it[5]. Go, make you[6] ready. 46

[*Exeunt Players.*

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

How now[7], my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently[8].

Ham. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*] Will you two help to hasten them[9]? 50

Ros. } We will, my lord.
Guil. }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Ham. What[10] ho! Horatio!

1. *Indifferently*, passably; cp. p. 81 n. 4.

2. *No more... them*, instead of (more or less) extemporising some piece of buffoonery or, "*with blabbering lips*" (Q1), repeating the particular set of idiotic jokes that the public counted on from each of them. "*Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?*" and "*Your beer is sour*" are two specimens, quoted in the part of this speech special to Q1 (and possibly aimed at the highly popular Kemp, who, in 1601 or 1602, temporarily deserted Sh.'s company for a rival troupe.

3. *Of them.* Supply "some."

4. *Quantity.* "Some quantity" is emphatically limitative; cp. p. 224 n. 4.—*Barren*, sterile-brained, dull-witted.

5. *Ambition.* from traces of which our texts of some other plays of Sh. are certainly not exempt. For an instance of buffoonery not in words, thus superadded (not to cite instances in our own days), see p. 208 n. 7.—Authors sometimes expressly left (possibly as safety-valves) places where the clown, or fool, might vent his wit, "*speak anything*".—*Uses it* = Fr. *en use ainsi.*

6. *You* = yourselves. Cp. e. g. p. 23 n. 2.

7. *How now* = how is it now? = what news? well?

8. *And... and*, both emphatic: "ay, and."—*Presently* = without delay; cp. II, II, 171.

9. *Will you... them*, and rid me of your presence?

10. *What* only emphasizes the

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet[1] lord, at your service.
Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just[2] a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal[3]
Hor O, my dear lord,—
Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue[4] hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee[5]? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp[6],
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee[7]
Where thrift[8] may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear[9] soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election[10]
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast taken with equal thanks[11] : and blest are those

eagerness of the call. Cp. its use before questions, as in I, I, 19.

1. *Sweet* : tenderly loved, very dear. "Sweet lord" is of course an emphatic, but would not then seem a strange, mode of address.

2. *E'en*, I, I, 121.—*Just* is finer than "honest" by all the united radiancy of classical and Biblical associations, such as the "*vir justus*" of Horace (*Odes*, III, III; cp. I, 60-66) and "*the path of the just is a shining light.*" (*Proverbs*, IV, 18).

3. *Conversation* = intercourse (with men).—*Coped withal* = encountered with. There is an etymological suggestion of trying one's strength with, something like "*se mesurer avec.*"

4. *Revenue*, normally then (and, in quite recent times, still occasionally) accented on the second.

5. *Thee.* For the scansion, compare e. g. "them" in III, I, 60.

6. *Candied* over with the sugar of flattery.—*Absurd*; for the accent cp. perhaps p. 45 n. 11.

7. *Crook*, the subject of which is, naturally enough, the man with "the tongue."—*Pregnant*, from "apt to conceive," came to mean "apt to receive, to be influenced, to obey promptly." Of this sense *N. E. D.* records one other instance.

8. *Thrift* = profit.

9. *Dear*, as being indeed my very self; cp. p. 28 n. 7, p. 160 n. 5.

10. *Of* = about.—*Election*, a word of the finest, almost of religious, quality. Cp. "*just*" in l. 54 and even "seal" in l. 65.

11. The American critic and poet Lowell, in one of his essays on *The English Poets* (1888), entitled *Sha-*

Whose blood and judgement[1] are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please[2]. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart[3],
As I do thee. Something too much of this[4].
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance[5],
Which I have told thee, of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot[6],
Even with the very comment of thy soul[7]
Observe my uncle: if his occulted[8] guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech[9],
It is a damned ghost[10] that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy[11]. Give him heedful note;

Iespeare once more, wrote of Horatio as "the only complete *man* in the play—solid, well-knit and true,... a nature so steady on its keel and drawing so much water."

1. *Blood and judgement*: passion (the blood being regarded as the source of emotion) and sober reason.

2. *Please*, subjunctive expressing uncertainty: may please.

3. *Core. N. E. D.* suggests that Hamlet may be playing on the word, which was then often associated (as some etymologists have since confused it) with the Latin "*cor*" = heart.—*My heart of heart*: the very heart of my heart.

4. *Something... this*, which delays mutual understanding, when little time is left, and, to one so exquisitely delicate, in some respects, as Hamlet shows himself, may seem, besides, "something of" an offence against the "*pudeur de l'amitié*."

5. *Circumstance of* = facts closely connected with. Cp. V, II, 2.

6. *That act*, the performance of that part of the play.—*Afoot* (literally: on foot), astir, on the move, may be meant to suggest a chase. Cp. "*unkennel*" l. 81.

7. *Even* (not two full syllables; cp. e. g. I, I, 121, = quite; cp. e. g. 54.—*The very... soul* = the comment (= capacity of interpretation) of thy very soul (Dowden).

8. *Occulted* (not current, of course, but not special to Shakespeare): more impressive than e. g. "hidden".

9. *Unkennel*; "kennel" is still found used of the hole or lair of the fox long after Sh.—*In*, apparently = in the course of; while *one speech*, II, II, 539-41, "is a-making" (I, II, 118) i. e. being delivered, at the poisoning, it seems (78).

10. *Damned ghost* or "goblin damn'd" I, IV, 40-41; cp. p. 103 n. 9.

11. *Stithy*, place where the stith (= anvil) stands, smithy. Associating the classical Vulcan's forge with the Hell of their religion was natural to men of the Renaissance.

For I mine eyes will rivet to his face, 85
And after we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming[1].
Hor. Well, my lord :
If he steal aught[2], the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft[3].

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and other Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying torches. Danish march, with kettle-drums. A flourish of trumpets.*

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle[4] : Get you[5] a place. 91
King. How fares our cousin[6] Hamlet?
Ham. Excellent[7], i' faith; of the chameleon's dish[8] : I eat the air, promise-crammed[9] : you cannot feed capons so. 95
King. I have nothing[10] with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine[11].

1. *In censure of* = to judge of; cp. I. III, 69.—*Seeming* = appearance.

2. *Steal aught*, in humorous literalness (as the end of the speech shows), but transparently implying that not the slightest movement of his face shall the king be able to pass off unnoticed. Cp. Fr. "*dérober*".

3. *Scape*, I, III, 38.—*I... theft*, I will pay for whatever is stolen thus.

4. *Be idle* = behave and speak as if I were *light-headed*, "put an antic disposition on," I, v, 172.

5. *You*; cp. p. 60 n. 10.

6. *Fares*, in the sense of the French "*va*;" but Hamlet, shamming obtuseness, as e. g. in II, II, 195, chooses to mistake the question for an enquiry as to the "fare" (i. e. food) he eats.—*Cousin*. I, II, 64.

7. *Excellent*, I, III, 116 n.

8. *Of* : I eat of.

9. *Eat... the air*: for such sonorous promises as that in I, II, 109 are only words, and words are breath, "air" merely.—*Crammed* immediately suggests the allusion to "*capons*."—As regards the ambition implied, cp. here 323-7, also p, 27 n. 2, and (guardedly) III, I, 124-125.

10. *Have nothing with* may mean "have nothing *to do* with" or *rather* (97-8) "have received nothing by."

11. *Mine* : for me, as they have no relation to what I asked, do not *belong*, so to say, to my question.

Ham. No, nor mine now[1]. [*To Polonius.*] My lord, you played once in the University[2], you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor[3]. 101

Ham. What did you enact[4]?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar[5] : I was killed in the Capitol[6]; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be[7] the players ready? 106

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience[8].

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal[9] more attractive. [*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*]

Pol. [*To the King.*] O, ho! do you mark that? 110

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord... You are merry[11], my lord.

Ham. Who, I? 115

Oph. Ay, my lord.

1. *Nor mine now*, since they are *gone* from me.

2. *In the University.* The allusion is to the occasional acting by students, in their College-halls, of plays, rarely in Greek, mostly in Latin, "great furtherances of learning," as the earl of Leicester, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, had written in 1584.

3. Note the emphatic inversion; with *am* cp. 43, 357, 561.

4. *Enact*, an impressively uncommon word, suited to such an uncommon performer and accordingly echoed by him. Cp. 185.

5. *Julius Caesar.* One Latin play, *Caesar Interfectus* (the epilogue of which survives and, by its judicial method and antithetic staccato style, resembles the Forum speech of Sh.'s own Brutus), was performed, in 1582, by the students of Christ Church, Oxford.

6. *In the Capitol*; an effective simplification of history, already found in Chaucer (as in Shakespeare's own *Tragedy of Julius Caesar*).

7. *Be*, then frequent for "are" (cp. 30), especially in questions.

8. *Stay upon your patience* (not ("pleasure") = are waiting in hope of your suffering them to appear; "upon" expressing dependence on.

9. *Metal*, printed "*mettle*" in the original editions. The confusion was usual; and an insulting insinuation is most likely.

10. *Shall I?* will you let me?

11. *Merry*, here, more particularly in the sense of facetious.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker[1]. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within this[2] two hours. 120

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black[3], for I'll have a suit of sables[4]. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year : but, by'r[5] lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on[6], with the hobby-horse[7], whose epitaph is ' For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot '.[8]

1. *Your*, in the indefinite familiar sense; you won't find another like me.—For *only*, cp. quotation in n. 12 p. 63.—*Jig*, given by Cotgrave, in his French dictionary (1611), as one of the meanings of " *farce*,... the jig at the end of an interlude, wherein some pretty knavery is acted. " Cp. p. 97, n. 6.

2. *This*, singular, before a total.

3. *Black*, the colour natural to *him*, as well as the sign of mourning.

4. *Of sables* (cp. IV, VII, 79), ingeniously explained as = not of sable, I, II, 242, but enriched (c. p. 198 n. 12) *with* sables, i. e. trimmings made of the fur of the sable martin (Fr. " *martre zibeline* "), which, it is added, is brown and may go with robes of the brightest hue. Littré, s. v. *marte*, has " une robe d'escarlate fourrée de martres de païs, " XV^e^ s.

5. *'r*, cp. 92 n. 6. Q^2^ prints, here, " *ber Lady* "; F, again, " *byrlady* ".

6. *Thinking on* = thinking of (I, II, 6), being thought of, remembered.

7. *With*; thus sharing the fate of.—*The hobby horse* was a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle of footcloth that nearly touched the ground. The performer exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. Cp. Douce, *Illustrations of Sh. and of Ancient Manners*, p. 598 of 1839 ed., where an engraving shows five of the seven figures of a " morrisdance " (see next note) towards 1620.

8. *Forgot*, the more usual form, then, of the past participle.—The Prince of Denmark here alludes, like other characters of the Elizabethan (or Jacobean) stage, to some popular ballad, lamenting the disappearance (apparently due, in part, to Puritanic influence) of this traditional trait from the rustic entertainment called the morris (i. e. Moorish)-dance (Old Fr. " *morisque* " = " mauresque "), the subject of one of the Dissertations of Douce. —As for the tone and manner of the moralising here, they would exactly suit a court-fool.

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters[1].

Enter[2] *a* King *and a* Queen *very lovingly; the* Queen *embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines*[3] *his head upon her neck : lays him down upon a bank of flowers : she, seeing him*[4] *asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* King's *ears, and exit. The* Queen *returns; finds the* King *dead, and makes passionate action*[5]. *The* Poisoner, *with some two or three* Mutes[6], *comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The* Poisoner *wooes the* Queen *with gifts*[7] *: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.* [*Exeunt*[8].

Oph. What means this, my lord? 130

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho[9]; it means mischief.

1. The *hautboys* are a courtly refinement of F on the habitual "*trumpets*" of Q².—From Ophelia's question (l. 130), and hesitating explanation (l. 133) it seems clear that this kind (Ap. *II*) of *dumb-show* had, at the very least, fallen into disuse; cp. the intensely archaic character of the play itself.

2. *Enter*, probably (p. 77) from the *rear* stage, the arras (p. 78 n. 3) being drawn and discovering the necessary *bank of flowers*.

3. *Declines* = bends down, leans.

4. *Him* = himself; cp. e. g. I, II, 56.

5. *Action*, I, IV, 60.

6. *Mutes*, actors "called forth to fill up a room and make a show" (quotation of 1579 in N. E. D.) Cp. p. 252 n. 1.

7. *Gifts*, I, v, 43-4.

8. That the royal poisoner should give no sign of alarm but ask Hamlet afterwards (l. 211) whether he has "*heard* the argument," has been mentioned as one of Sh.'s minor inconsistencies. Royal personages, however, especially in those days, well might think that they "extended" (cp. II, II, 361) condescension enough to the players by becoming attentive when *the speeches* began; and why not suppose (with the XIXth century Shakespearean scholar, Halliwell-Phillipps) that, during the dumb-show, King and Queen have been engaged in whispering to each other in "cheerful" (118) confidence?

9. *Marry*, I, III, 90.—*Miching*, to all appearance, from the now obsolete or dialectal verb "*miche*" (pronounced mitch or meetch), meaning among other things, to lurk or skulk.—*Mallecho* (first substituted, at the end of the XVIIIth century, by the famous Shakespear-

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play?[1]

Enter Prologue[2].

Ham. We shall know by this fellow : the players cannot keep counsel[3]; they'll tell all.

Prol. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to[4] your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently[5]. [*Exit.*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?[6]

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King *and* Queen.

Pl. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart[7] [gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground[8],
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen[9]
About the world have times twelve thirties[10] been,

can scholar Malone for the "*Mallico*" or "*Malicho*" of the original editions) = (in the language of the land made famous on the stage by the *Spanish Tragedy*) "*malhecho*" i. e. "mischief."

1. *Belike* = apparently.—*Imports* conveys, communicates

2. *Prologue*, probably in long black velvet cloak.

3. *Counsel*, in the obsolete sense of secret purpose; so that "keep counsel" means keep a secret.

4. *Stooping to* : bowing submissively before.

5. *Your hearing patiently* = that you should hear patiently. Cp. 107

6. *This*, which has "told" nothing.—*Posy* (i. e. poesy) *of a ring*, motto, generally in verse, engraved inside a ring, and so necessarily "brief;" e. g. "Let love abide Till death divide."

7. *Full* = fully. — *Phœbus*, and presently *Neptune*, *Tellus*, and *Hymen* mark off the style of the play as intended for no ignorant ears.—*Cart*, archaic, even then, for "Phœbus' fiery car."

8. *Salt wash*, quaint for "salt waves that wash the shore." — *Tellus*, Latin for the Earth.—*Orbed*, orb-shaped.—The rhyming detaches the inserted play still more palpably from the play proper.

9. *Thirty dozen*. Such round-about arithmetic (cp. the "*twelve thirties*" in the following line) is, like the syntax in 137 and the laborious structure of 138-139, one of the elements in the general effect of learnedly stilted solemnity.—*Sheen*, brilliancy.

10. *Times twelve thirties*, syntax as jointless as the puppet-like interlocutors are stiff; cp. notably 156,

Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual[1] in most sacred bands.
Pl. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer[2] and from your former state,
That I distrust[3] you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort[4] you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women's fear and love holds quantity[5];
In neither aught, or in extremity[6].
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest[7] doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.
Pl. King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:[8]
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—
Pl. Queen. O, confound[9] the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:

1. *Commutual*, not recorded earlier by *N. E. D.*—*Bands* = bonds.

2. *Cheer*, "good cheer" or "spirits," cheerfulness.

3. *Distrust you*, = feel distrust (= anxiety) on your account; p. 35 n. 11.

4. *Discomfort*. Note the ornamental jingle with the repeated "distrust" in 153 (cp. e. g. 160 and the inversions again.

5. *For* introduces sententious self-analysis, in the so-called Senecan manner, suited to grave and choice audiences.—*Holds*, (a singular due to each subject being considered emphatically by itself) = keeps.—*Quantity* = proportion; each varies directly as the other.

6. Abbott (§ 388[a]) construed: "in neither their fear nor their love *is there* aught, or *it is* in extremity." Cramped as the grammar intentionally is, what is meant at least is obvious.

7. *Littlest*, not special to Shakespeare; still used, pointedly, by fine writers, even in prose.

8. *Operant* (in such stiffly primitive verse, probably disyllabic), a learned equivalent of active.—*Leave to do* = leave off doing.

9. *Confound* (third person singular of the imperative; the subject understood being "God" or "the Fiend"), bring to perdition. The phrase had its full force then.

In second[1] husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.
Ham. [*Aside*] Wormwood[2], wormwood.
Pl. Queen. The instances that second marriage move[3]
Are base respects of thrift[4], but none of love :
A second time I kill my husband dead[5],
When second husband kisses me in bed.
Pl. King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But[6] what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to[7] memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity :
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall unshaken when they mellow be[8].
Most necessary[9] 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt[10] :
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy

1. *Second*, with archaic and sententiously emphatic omission of the indefinite article.

2. *Wormwood*, which is bitter.

3. *Instances that move* = motives that prompt.

4. *Respects* = considerations: cp. III, I, 68.—*Thrift*, 57,

5. Q^2 has "*my Lord thea's dead*;" and the sense may be "I make my husband die a second time." Cp. however l. 168 and the naïvely vigorous reduplication "kill dead" in *Titus Andronicus*.

6. *But* introduces some twenty-five lines the purport of which (especially of 175-83), together with their philosophical character, has induced some critics to recognise in them Hamlet's "insertion" (II, II, 540). Sequences of sententious couplets would, however, be an essential feature of a play of this type; and the very ring of such a speech echoes, for example, that of the couplets in which Cicero, in Kyd's translation of Robert Garnier's *Cornélie* (1594), had reminded Pompey's widow that "whatsoever lives is sure to die" (II, 255) and "whatsoe'er hath been begun must end" (279). Nor is there here much temptation to "mouth" (l. 3), still less anything calculated to make Claudius's guilt "unkennel itself" (76); cp. pp. 121 n. 9, 131 n. 8.

7. *To*, stricter than "of" would be: cp. I, I, 150 n.

8. The plural is due to the image of the fruits dominating the whole line.

9. *Necessary* : inevitable.

10. Carrying out our resolves is a thing that we owe to ourselves: who will insist on fulfilment, if not we?

Their own enactures with themselves destroy[1]:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.[2]
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves[3] should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove[4],
Whether[5] love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
The poor advanc'd[6] makes friends of enemies;
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs shall never lack a friend[7],
And who, in want, a hollow friend doth try
Directly seasons him his enemy[8].
But, orderly to end where I begun[9],
Our wills and fates do so contrary[10] run
That our devices still[11] are overthrown:
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
So think thou wilt no second husband wed:
But die[12] thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

Pl. Queen. Nor earth to me give[13] food, nor heaven [light!
Sport and repose lock from me[14] day and night!

1. *Their own enactures,* = either (as e.g. *N. E. D.*, which has no other instance of the word, hesitatingly suggests) the carrying of their purposes into acts; *or* what they themselves have enacted, i. e. decreed —*Destroy,* if not what has been called Elizabethan "compositor's grammar" (J. D. Wilson)", is due to the idea of plurality that pervades the line; cp. 179.

2. *On,* in direct consequence of.—*Accident,* in the philosophical sense, event of no essential significance.

3. *Our loves* = the love (for the plural, cp. I, II, 254) of others for us.

4. *Prove* = put to the proof.

5. *Whether*; not fully disyllabic; cp. p. 48 n. 4, and p. 127 n. 8.

6. *Advanc'd,* raised to power; cp. 57, 323.

7. *A friend,* object of both "*needs*" and "*lack.*"

8. *Directly... enemy* : at once makes him an enemy, ripe (for action) against him. Cp. I, III, 81 and III, III, 86.

9. *Begun,* a form of then, and much later, one form of the *preterit* (as e. g. "*sung*" still is).

10. *Contrary,* stressed on the second (like its Latin original).

11. *Still,* p. 11 n. 10.

12. *Die,* in the indicative.

13. *Give,* subjunctive used optatively (cp. presently "*lock,*" "*turn*", etc.) in self-cursing (167) *protestation* (p. 125 l. 4.).

14. *Lock from me*: exclude me from. Observe the parallel transposition

To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope![1]
Each opposite that blanks[2] the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,[3]
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!
Ham. If she should break it now!
Pl. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
My spirits[4] grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*
Pl. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [*Exit.*
Ham. Madam, how like you this play?
Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks[5].
Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.
King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence[6] in it?
Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence in the world.
King. What do you call the play?
Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically[7]. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna[8]: Gonzago is the duke's[9] name; his wife, Baptista: you

of subject and object, as regards the verb, in this line and the following.

1. *An anchor's cheer* = an anchorite's fare.—*My scope*, my outlook and range both of action and hope.

2. *Each*, not omitting any; *opposite*, cp. V, II. 62.—*Blanks* = blanches, turns pale (with fear).

3. *Strife*, the "opposite" of peace.

4. *Spirits*, I, I, 138 n.

5. *Queen*, with significant unguardedness. Cp. 252 and p. 150 n. 4.—*Protest*, p. 129 n. 13.

6. *Offence*, which Hamlet purposely pretends to understand "*idly*" (90), as meaning not moral harm but material, Cp. I, v, 135-137.

7. *Tropically*, by a trope, metaphorically, being intended to "*catch* the conscience of the king," II, II, 606. The "*trapically*" of Q^1 may testify to an intended quibble, such mispronunciation of very short *o* not being unknown, even now.

8. *Vienna*, the scene also of Shisgloomiest (p. XIII) tragi-comedy, *Measure for Measure*, produced, at Whitehall, at the end of 1604.

9. *Duke*. *King* and *duke*, and even *count*, are, in Elizabethan

shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what of that? your majesty and we that have free[1] souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade winch[2], our withers[3] are unwrung. 231

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to[4] the king.

Oph. You are as good as[5] a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret[6] between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. 235

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands[7]. Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come[8]:

plays, occasionally thus interchanged, in the case of rulers in such far off lands.—As regards the Italian names, cp. in *Measure for Measure*, Vincentio, the Duke, Angelo, his deputy, etc. and p. 2 n. 8.

1. *Free* II, II, 562.

2. In this proverbial phrase, *winch* (Q[2] and F), like *wince* (Q[1]) = kick, in impatience of pain.

3. *Withers* (Fr. " *garrot* "), which the stress of the collar or the pressure of the front point of the saddle may " *wring*, " fret, and " *gall.* "

4. *Nephew.* The near degree of relationship is the obvious point; besides which "*one*" Hamlet, "*nephew to the King*" of Denmark, has apparently (cp. n. 8) penned the speech of this *Lucianus* for him.—*To*, more solemn than *of*; cp. IV, IV, 14.

5. *Are as good as*, explain as well as.—In *Henry V*, what has taken place between the acts is thus told (and the imperfections of the staging apologized for) by a Prologue-like " *Chorus.* " Cp. the opening of *Romeo and Juliet*, the introduction to Act IV of the *Winter's Tale*, and the explanations given by " old Gower " as " *Chorus* " before each act of the (largely non-Shakespearean) *Pericles of Tyre.*

6. *Interpret*, as the puppet-show man does for his puppets.

7. *So... husbands* : Then (i. e. after the Man has made the corresponding declaration) the Woman, with her right hand taking the Man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the Minister, " I, *N*, take thee, *M*, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part... ". (*Book of Common Prayer*, XX *The form of Solemnization of Matrimony*).—*Must take*, the reading of Q[1], was first preferred by Pope to " *mistake* " (Q[2], F etc.) = ? pretend to take (Dowden) or ? ? take foolishly (W. W. Greg).

8. *Leave.... faces*, spoken, partly, in disgust at the player's most conventionally villainous *faces* (Bradley); but, of course, chiefly, in an outburst of impatience, all the fiercer if what is coming is *the* speech (cp. p. 128 n. 6). Only five lines are delivered, not " *some* "

« the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge [1]. »

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit[2], and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;[3]
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected[4],
With Hecate's ban[5] thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp[6] immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.*

Ham. He poisons him in the garden for his estate[7]. His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and writ in very choice Italian[8]: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

dozen ", as announced in II, II, 539; but is this a case for arithmetic?—*Come*, begin.

1. " *The croaking.... revenge*, " a condensation into one grotesque line of two in the crude old *True Tragedie of Richard the Third* (utilised, years before, in the third part of *Henry the Sixth*). The murderous king, surrounded by visions of his victims' ghosts, all " gaping for revenge, " there declaimed :

The screeking raven sits croaking [*for revenge*;
Whole herds of beasts come bel- [*lowing for revenge.*

With the raven here cp. the *kites* of II, II, 579-80.

2. *Thoughts... fit* : my thoughts being black, etc. The stiff spell-like construction is maintained throughout this line and the next.—*Apt* = fit and ready (cp. I, v, 31) to obey the " thoughts. ".—Noteth e close-pressed alliterations.

3. *Confederate* (attribute before the noun; which counters the order throughout 230) = allied, conspiring to assist. For the metrical value, cp. p. 127 n. 8.—*Season*, I, IV, 5.—*Else*, archaically preceding (cp. " confederate ") *no creature*.

4. *Of... collected*, like *collected from*, IV, VII, 143-4, where see note.

5. *Hecate* (disyllabic in Shakespeare and others; printed " *Hecat* " in Q^2 and F), a deity of magic, associated with the moon, in ancient Greece. She appears as the " pale " or " black " goddess of witchcraft in *Macbeth* for example.—*Ban*, baneful curse.

6. *Wholesome life* (cp. I, v, 70) = the health that keeps this man alive. —*Usurp* power (imperative, apparently governed by 244, though all the original editions have a comma after it). For stiff syntax cp. II, 2.

7. *Hamlet*, " tumbling out his words, trembling with excitement " (Stopford Brooke). For *He*, Q^2 has one of its *a*'s, which, like the other abbreviations in the line (whether they reproduce Sh.'s manuscript or not), *might* express such precipitate utterance. One of the 33 instances in Q^2, however, occurs in IV, I, 27; and F. prints *he* everywhere. Cp. M. A. Bayfield. —*Estate* = status, rank; cp. sc. III, 5; V, I, 220.

8. *Italian*. Collections of " novelle, " such as Bandello's and Cinthio's, have consequently been

Oph. The king rises.
Ham. What, frighted with false fire[1]?
Queen[2]. How fares my lord?
Pol. Give o'er the play.
King. Give me some light : away!
All[3]. Lights, lights, lights!
[Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.
Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep[4],
The hart ungalled play[5];
For some must watch[6], while some must sleep :
Thus runs the world away.
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers[7]—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me[8]—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes[9], get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir[10]?

searched, in vain.

1. *False fire* (a military equivalent of "poison in jest" l. 213; suited to such a "*martialist*", cp. note on I, II, 128) = a blank discharge.

2. *Queen*, whose own conscience is obviously free from any knowledge even of the manner of her husband's death. Cp. p. 130 n. 5.

3. *All*, obsequiously repeating a second order of Polonius (Q[2]).

4. Hamlet finds humorous vent for tumultuously grim exultation in singing snatches of ballads (cp. II, II, 393 ff.), perhaps, in the case of 266-9, improvised (cp. V, I, 212-5) or adapted, at least, to the present circumstances.—*Stricken* was often used of game wounded; and "*stricken deer*" in particular was a current phrase.—*Go* (and) *weep* over his approaching death. Cp. the stag "that from the hunter's aim had taken a hurt", at the beginning of Act II of *As You Like It*.

5. *Play*, like the "careless herd" of the same passage.

6. *Must*, expressing fate.—*Watch*; cp. p. 76 n. 3.

7. *This* ("waving the manuscript of his *Mouse-trap*," J. Q. Adams). That he refers to his share in the play just performed with such effect, is, at least, a natural interpretation. The singing *might* count also; cp. p. 133 n. 3.—*A forest of feathers*, ten shillings' worth would then equip a player.

8. *The rest... with me* = my fortune, in future, should change radically for the worse, like a Christian that should *turn* Mahometan.

9. *Provincial* = of Provins, where *rosa centifolia*, less finely called the "cabbage rose," is said to have been introduced by Crusaders. Now misnamed in England "Provence rose."—*Razed shoes*, shoes with part of the upper leather "*razed*" (i. e. cut) into rosettes, in imitation of such roses.

10. *Fellowship* = partnership.—*Cry* = pack (properly, of hounds, whose "music" Duke Theseus praises so finely in act IV of *A Midsummer Night Dream*).—*Sir*,

Hor. Half a share[1].
Ham. A whole one, I[2].
For thou dost know, O Damon dear[3],
This realm dismantled[4] was
Of Jove himself[5]; and now reigns here
A very, very—pajock[6].
Hor. You might have rhymed[7].
Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?
Hor. Very well, my lord.
Ham. Upon[8] the talk of the poisoning?
Hor. I did very well note him.
Ham. Ah, ah![9] Come, some music! come, the recorders[10]!

The repetition (in F) of this formal mode of address (contrast Hamlet's more usual "Horatio") emphasizes its playful character; cp. also, V, II, 1 n.

1. *Share* in the profits, which were divided between the *proprietors* of the "house" and the chief actors, the latter constituting the *company*. Below these were inferior players, the "*hirelings*," who drew fixed salaries; cp. Introd. p. XV. n. 4.

2. *A whole one*, as Sh. himself had then at the Globe.—*I*: "say I that *I* should get."

3. Hamlet, under the same impulse as at l. 256, humorously gives renewed proof of his singing powers. —*Dàmon* and Pythias, disciples of Pythagoras (at the time when Dionysius the Elder tyrannized over Syracuse), were, like Orestes and Pylades, among the celebrated pairs of friends in Ancient Greece. Damon (whose name almost calls for the alliterative epithet) pledged his life for Pythias. Their story (which a master of the Children of the Chapel, Edwards, had made the subject of a tragi-comedy as early as 1566) had, quite lately (1600), been put on the stage again by a very active minor playwright, Chettle (cp. p. 22 n. 10).

4. *Dismantled of*, stripped of its protector.

5. *Jove himself*. Cp. III, IV, 56.

6. *Very* : Fr, " vrai. "—*Pajock* is the reading now generally adopted for the "*paiock*" of Q^1 ("*Paiocke*" F), and explained by an "alleged" (*N. E. D.*) Northern Scotch "*pea-jock*" = peacock (which two very late quartos, 1676 and 1695, practically give), a bird represented, in Elizabethan natural history, as no less undesirable morally than musically, fiend-voiced, serpent-headed, thief-paced, lecherous, and an unnatural father.

7. *Rhymed*, easily though lamely, by finishing with the obvious, but comparatively mild, "ass."

8. *Upon* (cp. e. g. I, I, 149), immediately after, in consequence of.

9. *Ah, ha!* in exultation still at the success of the demonstration; *not* a cry for "revenge." Contrast l. 239, besides I, V, 29-31.

10. *Come*, interjectional (much like French "*çà*") addressed, it seems,

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy[1].
Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN[2].

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.
Ham. Sir, a whole history.
Guil. The king, sir,—
Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?
Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered[3].
Ham. With drink, sir[4]?
Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler[5].
Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer[6] to signify[7] this to the doctor : for, for me to put him to his purgation[8] would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

to Horatio, who apparently leaves (as the pair of spies re-enter), to return with the players after l. 314.—*Recorders* were a variety of flutes that Milton distinguishes (*Paradise Lost* I, 551) by the epithet "soft", but whose tone, for all its sweetness, was solemn (cp. Cowling).

1. *Belike*, 133.—*Perdy*, French : "*pardi*".—The couplet, as Clutton Brock pointed out, is a parody of two lines spoken by Hieronimo, at the close of sc. I, act. IV, of the *Spanish Tragedy*, in grim reference to *his* play within the play :

And if the world like not this tragedy.
Hard is the hap of poor Hieronimo.

Q[1] in fact here gave "*tragedy*", blunting the point of the jest; the showing up of the crowned villain had made it end, in one sense, happily, as *comedies* should do.

2. F. prints this after 275; which would account for 276-8 somewhat differently. *But* directions in advance, for the benefit of the players, are a common feature of prompt-books (cp. the uncertainty in n. 3 p. 55).

3. *Marvellous* p. 40 n. 3; *distempered* = disordered, upset. Guildenstern means "in mind", of course; but Hamlet (cp. 93 and 223) pretends to understand "in body."

4. Cp. I, II, 125 and IV, 8-10.

5. The would-be delicately clever "*rather*" (F.) affords to Hamlet a pretext for misunderstanding again by taking thecause to be a physical, bilious, state and not (the real meaning in 291) the emotion of anger.

6. *Should* for "would" (*Clarendon*); is not advice given, however? Cp. n. 7.—*More richer*, II, I, 11, n.

7. *To signify* = by giving, *if* you gave, notice of.

8. *Purgation*, which Hamlet (to himself) takes in the legal sense : a clearing from imputation of guilt.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair[1].

Ham. I am tame, sir : pronounce[2].

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you. 296

Ham.[3] You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed[4]. If it shall[5] please you to make me a wholesome[6] answer, I will do your mother's commandment : if not, your pardon and my return shall be[7] the end of my business. 302

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command[8]; or rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : my mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says : your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration[9]. 310

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish[10] a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart[11].

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet[12], ere you go to bed. 315

1. *Frame* (cp. p. 84 n. 6; V, I, 42) = form, order.—*From* = away from; cp. p. 117 n. 10.

2. *Tame*; the very reverse of "wild" in the sense of untamable.—*Pronounce*, a vocable of mock solemnity = declare, "impart" (300), your *affair*.

3. *Hamlet*, "idly" (85) in tone and manner; whence Guildenstern's rejoinder.

4. *Breed*, species, kind. But one current sense of "breeding" i. e. education, manners, may have, partly, suggested the word.

5. *Shall*, used conditionally after "*if*", and here approximating to "may".

6. *Wholesome* = sane; cp. 245 n.

7. *Pardon*, I, II, 56,—*Shall be*, must, against my will, be.

8. *You shall command*; is at your command, I assure you.

9. *Amazement*, followed by *admiration* (I, II, 192), cannot here be quite so emphatic as in III, IV, 111 (*O*).

10. *Astonish*, not the same word as the French "*estonner* = étonner", but influenced by it, and as emphatic as it then was.

11. *Impart*; cp. V, II, 90, and here n. 2.

12. *Closet* I. II, 76.

Ham. We shall[1] obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade[2] with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers[3].

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper?[4] you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend. 322

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement[5].

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows,'—the proverb is something musty[6].

Re-enter Players *with recorders*[7].

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw[8] with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?[9] 330

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly[10].

1. *We*, mockingly solemn and formal.—*Shall*; cp. I, II, 120.

2. *Trade* = business.

3. *Pickers and stealers.* "My duty towards my neighbour is... to keep my hands from picking and stealing..." (*Church of England Catechism*). Hamlet's phrase is equivalent to "by these hands, which are *not* to be trusted".

4. *Distemper*, 285. As regards the order of the words, cp. I, IV, 73.

5. Cp. II, II, 250; and III, I, 125. "Revenge" on Claudius would, in fact, "*advance*," raise, him to the throne. Cp. his very next rejoinder; also, V, II, 65.

6. *The proverb*, which finishes with "the steed starves."—*Something*, I, III, 124.

7. *Players with recorders*, Q^2; F. has "*one with a recorder*;" cp Introd. p. xx n. 1.

8. *To withdraw* (= have a word aside); for the construction cp. III, IV, 216.

9. *Go about* = endeavour (here, in fact, "with windlasses and with assays of bias", like a pair of young Poloniuses, II, I, 64).—*To recover the wind of me*, to get between the wind and me, so that, like game startled at the scent thus brought, I shall foolishly rush headlong *into* a *toil* (= large net for big game, snare; cp. Littré, s. v. "*toile*").

10. In this effort at superfine subtlety of language, Guildenstern may confusedly have intended to mean that, while his sense of "*duty*" to the Queen, who had sent him, was the cause of his possible excess of

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it[1], my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages[2] with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse[3] most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery[4]; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ[5]; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me[6], yet you cannot play upon me.

boldness, it was his "*love*" for Hamlet himself that had made him oblivious of "*manners*," perhaps.

1. Fr. "*je n'en sais nullement toucher*". On a viol or a lute, a Guildenstern could, at least, have strummed a little (cp. II, 1, 72 n.).

2. *Ventages*: vent-holes.

3. *Discourse*: utter in mutually related phrases.

4. *Mystery*, primarily: "*mystère*", of course; but with a secondary suggestion from the whole context, it seems, of another word of the same form (Lat. *ministerium*, French "*mestier, métier*" in the sense of skilled occupation, a secret consequently to the unskilled). Will not there be the flash of a quibble also in *sound* (primarily: to cause to resound, but more veiledly recalling the English equivalent of the French *sonder*)?

5. *Organ*, a word first used, in English, of *musical* (especially of wind) instruments.

6. *What instrument you will*; cp. note on 339.—The *frets* (Fr. *tons*) on viols and lutes were, then, strings of catgut, tied (whence their German name, *Bunde*) round the fingerboard (Fr. *touche*) to direct the fingering with the left hand. To *fret* a lute: to put frets on it. Figuratively, Hamlet might, perhaps,

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently[1].

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By th' mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then I will come to my mother by and by[2]. [*Aside.*] They fool me to the top of my bent[3].—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so. [*Exit Polonius.*

Ham. 'By and by' is easily said. Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

'Tis now the very witching[4] time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself[5] breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood[6],

be supposed to mean: you know what points should be touched upon, in talk with me, but you cannot draw the answers you wish to. Much clearer, however, is the punning introduction, here as elsewhere in Sh., of the other and current verb *fret*, irritate.

1. *Presently*, II, II, 171.

2. *By and by* did not then necessarily imply real delay. In the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611), it occurs in the sense of "straightway" i. e. directly. "He will come straight," Polonius will report to the Queen (sc. IV, 1); and Hamlet, in sc. III, I, 95, had reminded himself that his mother "stayed."

3. *Fool... bent* (cp. II, II, 30), make (or think that they make) as great a fool of me as I seem capable of being made.

4. *The very... time*, the time indeed; in Elizabethan phrase, "*even* the time."—*Witching*, hoarsely echoed by Macbeth, on his way to murder Duncan (II, I, 51-2);

"*now witchcraft celebrates*
Pale Hecate's offerings."

5. *Yawn*, leaving graves "tenantless" I, I, 115.—*Hell itself....* Cp. I, IV, 40-41.—*Breathes out*, as the Ghost of Tantalus does, in spite of itself, inspiring his whole race with unheard of crimes, at the beginning of Seneca's *Thyestes*.

6. *Drink hot blood*, a confession that, however qualified by the repetition of "*now*," "relishes" (to use Hamlet's own phrase in III, I, 118) both of Saxo's

And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on[1]. Soft! now to my mother[2].
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom[3]:
Let me be cruel[4], not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to her, but use none[5];
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever[6] she be shent[7],
To give them seals[8] never my soul consent! [*Exit.*

Amleth and, very likely, of the pre-Shakespearean, Elizabethan, Hamlet. Cp. the necessity for 377-83; also e. g. p. 147 n. 1.

1. *Bitter*, in very truth, "as death" (*Cymbeline*, V, v, 103), for death it would be. Elze compares "the bitter fit," in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, I, II, 18, meaning the death-throes.—*Day*, "pitiful day," whom night, "image of hell" (*Lucrece*, 764), must blindfold before Banquo can be murdered (*Macbeth*, III, II, 47).

2. *Soft!* III, I, 88.—*Now... mother*, for this brief soliloquy is essentially active.

3. *Nero*, to whose murder of his mother, Agrippina, a passing allusion is made, as to a matter of current knowledge, in *King John*, V, II, 152.—*Firm* against "unnatural" suggestions, but also in its resolve of revenge on him whose blood Hamlet could, at this hour, "drink hot."

4. *Cruel*, III, IV, 156.

5. *Daggers* (on which the emphasis bears in this part of the line, as it will do on "*use*" in the contrasted clause), words that stab.—*Use none*, though he sees in her his royal father's murderess (III, IV, 29-30) and at *no* time questions the duty of revenge, body for body and soul for soul (next scene, 79-95).

6. *Soever* (for which both Q^2 and F., against its usual practice, print the now vulgar corruption *somever*), to be joined with *how*.

7. *Shent*. After about 1600 the verb *shend* (= put to shame, blame, revile, destroy or, at least, injure) was used almost exclusively in the past participle, "shent." Even this form seems to have been felt as archaic in the latter part of the XVIth century (*N. E. D.*); but the touch of archaism would only add to the impressiveness of the concluding couplet. Cp. note on II, I, 117-118.

8. *Give seals*: ratify by making them into deeds, stabbing not in words only.—*Never... consent*; the absence of punctuation before and after "*my soul*," both in Q^2 and in F, makes the construction parallel to that in 377-8.

SCENE III. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us[1]
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you[2];
I your commission will forthwith dispatch[3],
And he to England shall[4] along with you:
The terms of our estate may[5] not endure
Hazard[6] so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.[7]
Guil. We will ourselves provide[8]:
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies[9] safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.
Ros. The single and peculiar[10] life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from noyance[11]; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests[12]

1. *Him*, the look of him, the impression he makes on me.—*Stands... us* — is it a safe state of things for us.

2. *You* p. 23 n. 2.

3. *Your commission* (cp. V, II, 18), the instructions with which I shall entrust you.—*Dispatch*, draw up without delay.

4. *Shall*, p. 97 n. 5.

5. *Terms of our estate*: the conditions on which, the circumstances in which, we hold our (royal) rank. Cp. p. 10 n. 2, p. 132 n. 7.—*May*, auxiliary of justification.

6. *Hazard*, risk, peril.

7. *Lunacies*, "for as the moon doth change and is variable, so be those persons mutable and not constant-witted" (*Breviary of Health*, 1547). Q^2 prints *browes* (? for *brawls*, J. D. Wilson).

8. *Ourselves provide* (more impressive than *prepare*, l. 2, though less so than *arm*, l. 24) = equip ourselves.

9. *Bodies*. One may partly contrast "spirit" in l. 14,

10. *Rosencrantz*, through whose lips there makes itelf still more definitely heard (particularly in l. 15-23) a voice far mightier than his, his creator's. Cp. note on I, III, 11-4, and in IV, V, the speech of the anonymous "gentleman," especially l. 93-95.—*Single*, isolated. —*Peculiar* = private; contrast 22-3.

11. *Noyance* (not special to Shakespeare), short for "annoyance," in the sense of harm.

12. *Spirit*, I, I, 38, etc.—*Depends and rests*. "When the subject is as yet future and, as it were, unsettled, the third person singular might be regarded as the normal inflection" (Abbott § 335). Cp. III, IV, 202

The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone[1], but like a gulf[2] doth draw
What's near it with it : it is a massy[3] wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser[4] things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls[5],
Each small annexment, petty consequence[6],
Attends the boisterous ruin[7]. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general [8]groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to[9] this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear[10],
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. }
Guil. } We will haste us[11].

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :

1. *Cease* (" partly an aphetic form of decease " *O.*), cessation. —*Dies not alone* : is not a *single* (11) death. The contracted phrase, which really, as Schmidt pointed out, is a case of the double negative (" cease, " " dies "), stimulates effort to grasp the thought in its dread magnitude.

2. *Gulf*, " sucking " (*Henry V*, II, IV, 10) gulf (= O. Fr. " *goulphe*, " in Charron, 1600 = " *goulfre* "), whirlpool.

3. *Massy*, massive.

4. *Lesser*, a double comparative; but, even now, occasionally used as an epithet.

5. *Mortis'd*. A mortise is the hole in a piece of timber into which another piece is fixed; French " *mortaise*; " verb " *mortaiser*. "—*Which* is merely conjunctive (Abbott § 272 inclines to make it = as to which), pointing emphatically back to " wheel. " *Which when it* (no comma in the original editions) apparently = and when *that*.

6. *Annexment*, an impressive, almost legal-looking, vocable, which Shakespeare may have formed, without any consciousness of particular audacity. *Consequence*, in the etymological sense of "'thing whose fate is bound up *with*, and *follows* another's ", is bolder still, and finer too.

7. *Attends*, accompanies —*Boisterous*, originally, often implied bulk as well as violence.—*Ruin* = downfall.

8. *General*, public, in which his people all joined. For the aphoristic value of the couplet form cp. note to I, II, 258-259.

9. *Arm you* = equip yourselves (cp. Fr. *armer un navire*, but also note on *provide*, I, 7).—*To* = with a view to, for.

10. *Fear*, object of fear.

11. *Haste us* (: hasten); a construction then frequent. Cp. p. 23 n. 2.

Behind the arras[1] I'll convey myself,
To hear the process. I'll warrant she 'll tax him home[2]:
And, as you said, and wisely was it said[3],
'Tis meet that some more[4] audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them[5] partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage.[6] Fare you well, my liege[7]:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit Polonius.*

O my offence is rank, it smells to heaven[8]:
It hath the primal eldest curse[9] upon it,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not[10],
Though inclination be as sharp as will[11]:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent:
And, like a man to double business bound[12],
I stand in pause[13] where I shall first begin,

1. *Arras* II, II, 164.—*Convey* often implies not only skill but stealth.

2. *The process* = what goes on.—*Tax*, I, IV, 18.—*Home*, so as to penetrate to the point aimed at, thoroughly.—As regards the prosody, cp. e. g. I, I, 84. The long verse, for all the "round" (III, IV, 5) vigour of its latter part, approximates to prose; cp. p. 61 n. 9.

3. *You*; the king had, in fact, merely echoed his Lord Chamberlain's aged wisdom (III, I, 181-185).—*And*, p. 123 n. 3.

4. *More* should now precede *than* immediately.

5. *Them* i. e. *mothers*.

6. *Of vantage*, generally taken to mean from the vantage-ground (i. e. advantageous position) of concealment.

7. *You*; cp. II, I, 6 n.—*Liege*, II, II, 42.

8. *O*, according to Elizabethan stage technique (p. 107, n. 8), was quite preparation enough for the soliloquy that was to follow.—*Rank*, offensively strong-scented.—*To*; cp. "And the Lord said unto Cain,... the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (*Genesis*, IV, 9-10).

9. *Curse*. "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.... A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said, My punishment is greater than I can bear" (verses 11-13).—*Eldest*: oldest (and of greatest weight); cp. V, II. 248.

10. As regards the prosodic value of the pause, significant here of silent struggling for inspiration, cp. e. g. p. 108 n. 8.

11. Though my desire to pray *is* as keen as my resolve to do so.

12. *To.... bound*, prepared (I, V, 6) to undertake two distinct occupations.

13. *Stand in pause*, remain in hesitating doubt.

And both neglect. What if[1] this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself[2] with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet[3] heavens
To wash it white as snow?[4] Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence[5]?
And what's in prayer[6] but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But O what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects[7] for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition[8], and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence[9]?
In the corrupted currents[10] of this world

1. *What if*, what would it matter, even if .

2. *Thicker than itself*, more than twice its natural size.

3. *Sweet*, much like "'gracious" in I, I, 164. Cp. III, IV, 47.

4. *Wash... snow* recalls one of the penitential *Psalms* (*Ps.* LI, beginning with "Have mercy upon me O God," and described, in the "Authorized Version" of 1611, as a Psalm of David, after the Lord had sent Nathan, the prophet, who reproached him with having caused the death of Uriah to marry his widow, Bath-Sheba): "*wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" (v. 7). Still more familiar, now at least, is the promise of the Lord in the 1st chapter of Isaiah, v. 18: "*though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*"

5. To face boldly transgression that demands punishment.

6. *Prayer*, yearningly dwelt on, and consequently disyllabic, *here*.

7. *Effects*, resulting gains.

8. *Mine* (with *i* short); cp. *passim* and p. 7, n. 1 (F. has it, not *my*, e. g. in I, II, 151, as well as in I, v. 59). Note the emphatically self-accusing "*own*". — *Ambition* = object of ambition (cp. in the next line "offence" = object for which the offence has been committed, "*effect*" (54) of the offence). —That the Queen has not been for Claudius a mere means to the crown, he will declare more explicitly still in IV, VII. 12-6; and their heavily sensual attraction for each other is, indeed, an essential of the drama (cp. 67 and Ap. *M*).

9. Was the "commission" referred to at the beginning of the scene (l. 3) already intended to be what we hear at the end of sc. III of the following act? If so, how could there be no allusion to this in the present self-accusing soliloquy? One is reminded of Mr. A. B. Walkley's contention (p. 86 n. 2) that Elizabethan dramatic technique was largely one of "rhetoric," and of successive and comparatively detached "themes." Cp. pp. 86 n. 2, 109 n. 8, 116 n. 6.

10. *Currents*; "courses" would be the usual word.

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize[1] itself
Buys out the law[2] : but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature[3], and we ourselves[4] compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults[5],
To give in evidence. What then? what rests[6]?
Try what repentance can : what can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed[7] soul, that struggling to be free
Art more engag'd![8] Help, Angels, make assay[9] :
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. [*Retires and kneels.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it pat[10], now he is praying;
And now I'll do it : and so he goes to heaven;

1. *Oft*, not commonly replaced by its derivative "often" before the XVIth cent. and still found in ordinary prose in the XVIIIth. —*The wicked prize*, the prize thus wickedly secured.

2. *Buys out the law*, serves as a bribe to remove the punishment incurred at the hands of the law.

3. *Action*, legal process, suit. — *Lie* (of a legal action) means to be admissible, sustainable. Cp. note 3 p. 213.—*Hlis.* I, 1. 37.

4. *We ourselves* are, (cp. I, II, 90), or (if *and* is sufficiently emphatic here to have the force of "moreover;" cp. p. 123 n. 3) being.

5. *To the teeth and forehead* : confronting *our faults*, and, so to speak, casting (which explains "*to*") the "*evidence*," i. e. our testimony before the Judge "*above*," in their face and to their very teeth (cp. IV, VII, 55).

6. *Rests*, remains.

7. *Limed*, caught like some bird in a bush smeared with lime (Fr. "*glu*").

8. *Engaged*, entangled.

9. *Make assay* has no stopping before it in Q[2]; which supports the interpretation : "help me (to) make the attempt." The comma after "Angels" in F. does not necessarily point to a different grammatical construction. — The note of exclamation usually inserted before "*make*" renders it uncertain whether the two last words of the line may not be addressed by Claudius to his own soul, as 70-71 will be to his knees and to his heart.

10. *Now*, p. 174, n. 9.—*Pat.* There is ferociously (cp. p. 139 n. 6) feline neatness in the familiar monosyllable (cp. *trip* in l. 93), as there

And so am I reveng'd : that would[1] be scann'd :
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send[2]
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary[3], not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread[4],
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May[5];
And how his audit[6] stands who knows save Heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought[7],
'Tis heavy with him[8] : and am I then reveng'd,
To take him[9] in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?[10]
No.
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent[11] :

will be, indeed, in the swift change of mind suddenly to follow and in the reason for it.

1. *Would* = requires to; a use of " would " not uncommon with Bacon, for example.

2. *Sole*, more impressive than " only "—Note the insistently sibilant quality of the line.

3. *Hire and salary*, wages and remuneration for the murder done. The two words make one phrase; cp. e. g. *head and source*, II, II, 55.

4. *Grossly* appears, from what immediately follows, to mean " in a gross state of sin "—*Full of bread* recalls the scriptural phrase (Ezekiel, XVI, 49) " fulness of bread " (i. e. abundance of food), a cause of " iniquity ".

5. *Broad blown* (with adjective used adverbially). Cp. I, v, 12, 76, 79. — *Flush* = full, to excess (80), of the joy of living, lusty.

6. *Audit*, account received (originally heard) and examined at a certain date by an " auditor "; used by others than Shakespeare of the rendering of accounts to God at death.

7. *In our circumstance and course of thought* may mean : either so far as the roundabout approaches (cp. III, I, 1) and range of our thought enable us to judge; or (with a longer pause after " *circumstance* ") *in* our earthly condition and *according to* the course our thought takes in consequence.

8. *'Tis heavy* : it goes heavily; *with him*, as regards him. He has to bear much, for the " audit " is heavy against him still.

9. *To take*, by taking (p. 135 n. 7). — *Him* (pointing to Claudius).

10. *Season'd* : III, II, 188.—*Passage* to the other world; not an uncommon use of the word then.

11. *Up* (as in " to put up one's sword "), back into the scabbard. —*Hent* may be the noun corresponding to a verb of the same form, used elsewhere by Shakespeare twice; the meaning would then be *grasp*, in the literal sense. It has been suggested, however, that the acceptation is figurative (i. e. what is grasped mentally, intention, *design*), as in one contemporary passage given by *N. E. D.* A third authoritatively recognised possibility is that " hent " here = " hint, " in its most frequent sense with Sh., occasion, *oppor-*

When[1] he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At game a-swearing[2], or about some act
That has no relish[3] of salvation in it;
Then[4] trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven[5],
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes[6]. My mother stays[7]:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit*[8].

King. [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

tunity. The physical directness (cp. p. 149 n. 9) of the first interpretation seems most in keeping with the spirit of the speech.

1. *Drunk*. The punctuation is Q²'s and seems to indicate that *drunk*, uttered with intense disgust (cp. e. g. I, IV, 8-22), dominates the line; two unlike *effects* of drunkenness follow. As regards the first, it may not be altogether idle to note the same absence of scruples about doing justice on a treacherous murderer, when altogether defenceless, as Saxo's Amleth (and Belleforest's)—or e. g. Kyd's Hieronimo—had shown.

2. *At game*; one still says "at school, at prayers" etc.—*A-swearing*: engaged in swearing (cp. note on *then*, 93). The text here followed is Q²'s again; F. has, more symmetrically: "*At gaming, swearing.*" Cp. p. XXI, ll. 8-9.

3. *Relish*, flavour (here, pleasing), however slight.

4. *Then*. In Nashe's novel, *Jack Wilton*, Cutwolfe forces his brother's murderer to utter the most damning blasphemies, and then shoots him *in the throat*, to make sure that he will not be able to recall them (Jusserand, *Roman au temps de Shakespeare*).

5. *Trip* (cp. note on l. 73) him up.—*Kick at heaven*; much as Dante, climbing out of Hell (*Inferno*, XXXIV), saw Lucifer's legs still rising above the place where he fell headlong.

6. *Whereto it goes*. See Appendix *I*.

7. *Stays* (cp. I, III, 57) my coming = is waiting for me to come to her.

8. *Exit*, sparing the murderer quite groundlessly (as we shall hear at once), and thus unconsciously sacrificing Polonius, Ophelia, his mother, Laertes, and himself.

Scene IV. *The Queen's closet.*

Enter Queen *and* Polonius.

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home [to him[1] :
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with[2],
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood[3] between
Much heat[4] and him. I'll silence me even[5] here.
Pray you, be round[6] with him.

Ham[7]. [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you, fear me not[8]. Withdraw,
I hear him coming. [*Polonius hides behind the arras*[9].

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father[10] much offended.

1. *Straight* = straightway (p. 139 n. 2).—*Look* = see, take care, that. —*Lay* (i. e. deal) blows, here figuratively; so that "lay *to*" = attack. —*Home*, going to the core or root of the matter; cp. III, III, 29.

2. *Pranks*, could mean, then, tricks not only mischievous, but malicious (in the more forcible acceptation of the word).—*Too broad*, not restrained within tolerable limits.—*Bear with* = have patience with, bear.

3. *Screen'd and stood*, practically : stood as a screen.

4. *Heat* of anger, on the king's part.

5. *Sconce* (to be taken in the sense in which Falstaff, in not unlike circumstances, *Merry Wives*, III, III, 96, uses the full form "*ensconce*," i. e. entrench, conceal securely), though often substituted, is only an "emendation" of a mid-XVIIIth century editor, Hanmer, for the more pointed (214-5) "silence" of all the earlier editions (except Q^1, which has "*shroud*" = conceal).—*Me* = myself.—*Even*, I, I, 121 (*e'en*, F; cp. p. 121 n. 7).

6. *Round*, III. I, 183.

7. *Hamlet*, with wildness at once pointedly intentional and fiercely sincere Cp. lines 307, 308, 312, 313, 316, 366, of scene II, and 9, 11, 17 of the present one.

8. I can assure you that you have nothing to fear as regards me; cp. I, III, 51.—*Clarendon* thus prints, as prose, 7-8; other editors prefer verse (arbitrarily broken).

9. *Arras*, II, II, 164.

10. *Thy father*. One symptom of how little this "mother" can read in the heart of this son. Cp. p.19 n. 4.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.
Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue[1].
Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
Queen[2]. Why, how now, Hamlet!
Ham. What's the matter now?
Queen[3]. Have you forgot me?
Ham. No, by the rood[4], not so : 15
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And—would[5] it were not so!—you are my mother.
Queen. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can [speak[6].
Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall[7] [not budge;
You go not till I set you up a glass 20
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!
Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho[8]! help, help, help!
Ham. [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras*[9].

1. It is partly, no doubt, real alarm that has made the Queen strike a louder and sharper note. Observe e. g. the change from *thou* to *you*, and cp. 19 n.—*An idle tongue*, a tongue that no sense guides, III, II, 85.

2. *Queen*, helplessly. — *How now*, cp. I, I, 53.

3. *Queen*, terrified at the "wildness" (I, V, 133) in his eyes.—*Forgot*, III, II, 123.

4. *Rood*, holy rood, cross.

5. *Would* = I wish.

6. *Queen*, rising to escape (19-20). —*Set* oppose.—*That can speak* with enough weight and authority of speech to silence you.

7. *Sit you* : cp. p. 60 n. 10.—*Shall*, an order enforced by appropriate physical action. In Q^1, when the Queen relates this interview to the King (as, here, in IV, I, 8-12), she will say :

Whenas he came, I first bespake him fair,
But then *he throws and tosses me about,*
As one forgetting that I was his [*mother.*

Cp. in Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), book XVI, chap. V, where the country schoolmaster Partridge, taken to see Garrick as Hamlet, sympathetically exclaims, "ay, *shake the vile, wicked wretch to pieces!* If she was my own mother, I should serve her so." Hence her terror, culminating in the fatal cry for help. Did not Victor Hugo, remembering also III, II, 377 ff, write, in his *William Shakespeare*, II, II, IV, "Hamlet est cette chose sinistre, un parricide possible?"

8. *What, ho!* III, II, 47.

9. *Drawing*, "*whipping out his*

Pol. [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*

Queen. O me[1], what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not : is it the king[2]?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother[3].

Queen[4]. As kill a king!

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better[5] : take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger[6].
Leave wringing of[7] your hands : peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damned custom have not brass'd it[8] so
That it be proof and bulwark against sense[9].

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag[10] thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act

rapier", IV, I, 10, unhesitatingly to keep his promise to himself of the scene before, l. 91-2.—*For* : I'll wager.—*Through the arras*; cp. Queen Elizabeth herself, in fits of terror (Jusserand, *Hist. Lit. Peuple Anglais*, vol. II, p. 700).

1. *O me* : O woe is me, III, I, 160.

2. *Nay* : do not ask *me*.—*Is it the King?* When Edmund Kean (1787-1833)—to see and hear whom was, Coleridge said, like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning—first spoke these words, " the whole theatre rose in wild appreciation " (Stopford Brooke).

3. *Marry*, generally transitive now.—Note the grim mockery of the facile, jingling rhyme.

4. *Queen*, in sincere amazement. See Prof. Bradley's study of Gertrude's " soft animal nature, very dull and very shallow. She loved to be happy like a sheep in the sun, and... it pleased her to see (or imagine) others happy like more sheep in the sun. " Cp. p. 130 n.5.

5. *Better*, superior in rank.

6. Cp. V, II, 57-62, on the " fortune " of other busibodies in the King's evil service.

7. *Leave*, II, I, 51.—*Of*, I, v, 175.

8. *Damned*, " of habits devil " 162); cp. p. 121 n. 10.

9. *Bulwark*, used adjectively in imitation of "proof".—*Sense*, feeling.

10. *Wag* has about it a superior suggestion of " idle " (12), light-headed, as light-tongued, impertinence.

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty[1],
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister[2] there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths[3] : O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction[4] plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion[5] makes
A rhapsody of words : heaven's face doth glow[6];
Yea, this solidity and compound mass[7],
With tristful visage, as against the doom[8],
Is thought-sick[9] at the act.

Queen. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index[10]?

Ham.[11] Look here, upon this picture, and on this:
The counterfeit presentment[12] of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow;

1. *That* = that it. as.—*Blurs*, defaces by "smirching," IV, v, 111. —*Modesty*. Fr. "*pudeur*."

2. *Sets a blister*, by branding "innocent love" as harlotry. Cp. again IV, v, 110-1.

3. *Dicers' oaths*, when they swear that they will gamble at dice no more.

4. *Contraction*, in the sense of contract. is not limited to Sh., and was used especially of a marriage contract.

5. *Sweet*; cp. III, III, 45.—*Religion*, the religious phrases into which such "*vows*" are cast.

6. *Rhapsody* = mere string (Fr. *enfilade*).—*Glow* with both shame and anger (cp. *the doom*, 50).

7. This compact mass, the earth, which is all solidity and stolidity.

8. *Tristful* (found before Shakespeare's time), a barbarously intensive compound, made of the obsolete adjective "*trist*" (= Fr. "*triste*") and "full."—*Against*, in expectation of; *the doom*, Doomsday, when, in the phrase of the *Second Epistle* of Peter, III, 11, *all things shall be dissolved*.

9. *Thought-sick* = sick from anxiety; cp. III, I, 85. Lines 48-51 are a *louder* 52), more oratoric l, illustration of the ethical fallacy a psychological *truth* expressed in the confession to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in II, II, 295-300.

10. *Ay* (neither identical with Fr. *aïe!* nor pronounced like it. *me* : Ah me! but here (as appears from what immediately follows) not with the force of *O me*, 25.—*Index*. then = table of contents, *prefixed* to a book; hence, indication of what is to follow, preface, prologue.

11. *Hamlet*, pointing apparently, s in the illustration in Rowe pp. 1 n. 1, 65 n. 5) at *full-length* (58-59) portraits.

12. *Counterfeit presentment* = counterfeited (Cotgrave, like Sh., elsewhere. has a "counterfeit" = a portrait) representation (Sh.); Fr. "portrait *tiré pour trait*".

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself[1],
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station[2] like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill[3];
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man[4]:
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome[5] brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed[6],
And batten on this moor?[7] Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age[8]
The hey-day[9] in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion[10]; but sure that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err[11],

1. *Hyperion*, I, II, 40.—*Curls*, for abundance and brightness (which, in all likelihood, implies fairness; cp. lines 66-67).—*Front*, a fine Latin word, fitting *Jove*.

2. *Station*, in the (now exceptional) sense of attitude, in standing.

3. *New-lighted*, newly, just, alighted.—*A heaven-kissing hill*, e. g. Mount Atlas, in the 4th book of the *Æneid*. On his mission to bid Æneas leave the Queen of Carthage,

Hic primum paribus nitens Cyllenius alis.
Constitit (252-253).

Or, in Phaer's translation (pub. 1558), which Shakespeare well may have read,

There first on ground with wings of might doth Mercury arrive.

But such images were, so to speak, in the air then.

4. Cp. p. 28 n. 11.

5. *Wholesome*, I, v, 70.

6. *Fair*, cp. note on "moor," 67.—*Mountain*, possibly suggested, more or less unconsciously, by the close of l. 59.—*Leave*, l. 34.—*To feed* = in modern syntax, feeding.

7. *Batten* (palpably expressive of disgust, after "feed" in the line before), feed as animals do (cp. p. 150 n. 4) and fatten (cp. Appendix *M*.).—*Moor* was used then (and later), of low marshy ground. A quibble, on the presumably *dark* complexion of the "villain" of the play ("*with a face like Vulcan*" Q[1]; cp. p. 121 n. 11), so unlike his "*fair*" brother with "Hyperion's curls," seems quite possible.

8. *Your age*. Cp. Appendix *K*.

9. *Hey-day* = "frolicsome wildness" (Schmidt).

10. *Sense*; sensuous (80) feeling.—*Sure*, surely.—*Motion*, apparently here = impulse, inclination, rather than emotion vaguely.

11. *Apoplex'd* (not special to Sh. = struck with apoplexy, paralyzed).—*Err*; l. 75-76 complete the sense

Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er[1] so thrall'd
But it reserv'd some quantity[2] of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was it
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?[3]
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans[4] all,
Or but a sickly part of one true[5] sense
Could not so mope[6].
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine[7] in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
When the compulsive[8] ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason panders will.[9]
Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more[10]:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained[11] spots
As will not leave their tinct[12].
Ham. Nay, but to live

1. *Ecstasy*, II, I, 101.—*Ne'er*, II, I, 11.

2. *Quantity*, in the sense in which Petruchio, to insult a tailor (proverbially, the ninth part of a man) calls him "thou *quantity*, thou *remnant*" (*Taming of the Shrew*, IV, III, 112).

3. *Cozen'd*, cheated.—*Hoodman-blind* (cp. to *hoodwink* and to *blindfold*), blindman's buff.

4. *Sans*, used, almost exclusively, with words of French origin, was emphatic in proportion to its rarity.

5. *True*, not deceitful.

6. *Mope* = be in a state of bewilderment; a sense still found in Northern dialects (*O.*).

7. *Mutine* (not special to Sh.) = mutineer (cp. V, II, 6).

8. *Compulsive* (not recorded before Sh.; cp. note on I, I, 103) whose nature it is to exercise compulsion.

9. *Panders*, acts as pander *to*. —*Will* = appetite, lust; cp. p. 51 n. 1.

10. For other reasons, some critics have thought that her son, in this scene, spoke too voluminously (F. in fact, leaves out 78-81) as well as rhetorically; and the oratorical ring, covering, at times, what, for us, is Hamlet's distinctive note (cp. Avant-Propos, p. 11 n. 5), is undeniable. Eloquent sermonising has, however, had its place on more than one kind of stage; nor would, in real life, sonorously vehement copiousness be inappropriate with a Gertrude.

11. *Grained* = ingrained, i. e. dyed fast, so that the "*black*" will not wash off.

12. *Tinct* = tincture, dye, colour.

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed[1],
Stew'd in corruption, honeying[2] and making love
Over the nasty sty.
Queen. O, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears[3]; 95
No more, sweet Hamlet!
Ham. A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part[4] the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings[5];
A cutpurse of the empire[6] and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole, 100
And put it in his pocket!
Queen. No more!
Ham. A king of shreds and patches[7]—

Enter Ghost[8].

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards[9]! What would your gracious figure?

1. *Rank*, III, III, 36.—*Enseamed*: made greasy; cp. *ensimer* = "mettre du saindoux sur l'endroit des étoffes", a French technical term in the preparation of cloth.

2. *Honeying*, calling each other honey, i. e. as sweet as honey.

3. *Words like daggers* echoes (as 89 had echoed 20-1) Hamlet's promise to himself, III, II, 380.—*In*, into.—*Mine*, p. 7, n. 1.

4. *Not a twentieth part* of.

5. *Vice.* In the old Morality Plays, the Vice, with the assistance of the Devil, provided the unedifyingly comic element. The Elizabethan stage clown was, in fact, his descendant.—*Of*, apparently = among, being thus the phrase equivalent to "a clown among kings, a clown of a king". Which, like what will follow, down to the entrance of the Ghost, reads like a forecast of the tone and manner of, not a little in Hugo's *Châtiments*.

6. *Empire.* Cp. note on "imperial," I, II, 9.

7. *Of shreds and patches*, referring to the variously coloured (and thus *patch-like*) dress of the domestic *fool*; so that the phrase is a variation on "*a vice of kings*," four lines before.

8. *Enter Ghost*, interrupting a volley of insulting phrases that recalled (in the much more copious and eloquently imaginative vein in which this whole scene is cast) the explosion in II, II, 580-1, for which Hamlet had then so bitterly rebuked himself; cp. here l. 106-108. Q^1 has *Enter Ghost in his night-gown*, i. e. dressing-gown; cp. l. 135.

9. *You heavenly guards!* With 103-104 compare and contrast I, IV,

Queen. Alas, he's mad! 105

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion[1], lets go by
The important[2] acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation[3] 110
Is but to whet thy almost blunted[4] purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits[5]:
O, step between her and her fighting soul:[6]
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works[7]:
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady? 115

Queen. Alas, how is it with you,

39; here, there is neither doubt nor, properly speaking, terror; awe rather, which will, almost at once, "merge into love" (Stopford Brooke).

1. *Laps'd in time and passion.* Johnson's interpretation, "having suffered time to go by and passion to cool," has generally been adopted; and Mr. Onions half inclines to think that this "may be an early instance, with inverted construction," of a XVIIth century sense of "lapse," viz. to let slip. *Clar.* would rather take "in passion" as equivalent, practically, to "by indulging in mere passion;" cp. p. 154 n. 8.

2. *Important* well may (owing, apparently, to some influence of "importunate") have here its occasional Shakespearean sense of "urgent, not to be delayed."

3. *This visitation* (cp. II, II, 25 n. and, for the pronunciation, which, here, has an effect of solemn hollowness, I, I, 156 n.), which cool criticism has found ill-timed, considering its effect on the Queen, 105 (W. J. Lawrence). Cp. Ap, *D* § 1.

4. *Almost blunted.* Prof. Stoll has argued that reproaches of this sort (and indeed passages of *self-accusal* for delay as well), being part of the technique of the Senecan and neo-Senecan tragedy of revenge, are *not*, even in Shakespeare, really significant of the hero's psychology. Hamlet, at the beginning of this scene (l. 24-26), had certainly shown sufficient sharpness of purpose; and the fundamental reason for the reappearance of the Ghost *now* (cp. last note) is pathetic, rather than properly *dramatic*, effectiveness. Desirable, however, as awareness of the traditions and conventions of a genre undoubtedly is, the risk of its dimming our perception of each individual work is no less evident. Here, for example, was not the audience, in fact, obviously expected to "take the Ghost's word" for it that his "tardy son" *was*, to some extent, "laps'd in time and passion?"

5. *Amazement* (more forcible then than now or in III, II, 310) = distracting bewilderment.—*Sits*, with an idea of pressing (I, III, 56), of oppressing.

6. *Fighting soul*; cp. V, II, 4.

7. *Conceit*, imagination; p. 100 n. 4. —*Strongest works*, works most strongly, produces the strongest effects.

That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal[1] air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;[2]
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm[3], 120
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements[4],
Start up and stand an end[5]. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle[6] cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he [glares[7]! 125
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable[8]. Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert[9]
My stern effects[10]: then what I have to do
Will want true colour[11]; tears perchance for blood. 130

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all[12]; yet all that is I see.

1. *Incorporal*, now supplanted by the less legitimate "incorporeal."

2. *Spirits*, a word suggesting closer relation to bodily functions than "soul" would. Cp. *spirit* in V, II, 353, and the French phrases "*esprits vitaux*," "*esprits animaux*."—*Wildly*, distractedly.

3. *Alarm*, sudden call to arms. The comparison belongs to that martial element in the play which modern readers are apt not to realise so vividly, or sympathetically, as Sh.'s audience must have done (cp. *e. g.* V, II, 395-9).

4. *Bedded* (suggested by "sleeping,"), which lay flat, as if in bed.—*Like life* = with an appearance of life (in the sense of feeling).—*Excrements*, mere excrescences; no real, feeling, parts of the body.

5. *Start... stand* (in all early editions), plural forms probably due to the collective sense of "hair," reinforced by the actual plurals in 120 and 121.—*An end*, I, v, 19.

6. *Sprinkle*, suggestive here of the sprinkling of holy water, of purification from evil.

7. *Glares* seems to express, here, ghastly intensity of brilliancy.

8. *Capable* (cp. III, II, 11) of feeling.—Mechanically scanned, the line offers one of those difficulties that natural delivery proves to be theoretical fictions.

9. *Convert* = change entirely.

10. *My stern effects* = the stern deeds, or deed, by which I am to give *effect* to my "purpose" and "your dread command."

11. *Want true colour*, not have the *colour* that will show me *true* to purpose and command; my tears, perhaps, will flow, instead of the incestuous murderer's blood.

12. *Nothing at all.* In *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (sc. VI), Hamlet curtly explains this by the fact that she is "*no longer worthy*" to look

Ham. Nor did you nothing[1] hear?
Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.
Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals[2] [away!
My father, in his habit as he lived[3]! 135
Look, where he goes, e'en now, out at the portal[4]! [*Exit Ghost.*

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain :
This bodiless creation ecstasy[5]
Is very cunning in[6].
Ham. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time, 140
And makes as healthful music[7] : it is not madness
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word[8]; which madness
Would gambol from[9]. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction[10] to your soul, 145
That not your trespass[11] but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film[12] the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption[13], mining all within,

on her first husband's form. That a Ghost both visible and audible to one of the persons present should be neither to the rest, would not, in any case, rouse incredulity in an Elizabethan audience.

1. *Nor... nothing*, I, II, 158.

2. *Steals*; contrast the "stalks" of I, I, 50.

3. *In his habit as he lived* apparently means dressed as he would now be, if he was living still; probably (see note on *Enter Ghost*) in contradistinction to the armour that, in Act I, suited the martial surroundings and circumstances.—Making *as* = "as if" seems less natural.

4. *E'en*, I, II, 218.—*Portal*, suggestive of royal grandeur.

5. *Ecstasy* (II, I, 101); cp. 105.

6. *Cunning in* = skilful at.

7. *Music*, for "What a piece of work is a man!" (II, II, 300).

8. *Re-word* (not recorded before Shakespeare) is taken to mean, here, "repeat word for word." In the first line of the *Lover's Complaint*, appended to the first edition of the *Sonnets*, it is applied to an echo.

9. *From*, I, II, 164.—An alienist has observed, needlessly perhaps, that this *test* would suffice as little as normality of pulse to prove sanity.

10. Do not apply as an unction (cp. IV, VII, 141, and *O. F. onction* sometimes = "*onguent*") to your soul that flattering thought.

11. *Trespass*, the word in the Anglican rendering of the prayer taught by Christ : "*Forgive us our trespasses.*"

12. *Skin and film* : make a skin, a mere film, form over.

13. *Whiles*, not uncommon then for "while."—*Rank*, c. g. I, II, 136.

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost[1] on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times[2]
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb[3] and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser[4] part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a[5] virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat[6],
Of habits devil[7], is angel yet in this,
That to the use[8] of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock[9] or livery,
That aptly[10] is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy:
For use almost can change the stamp of nature[11],
And either.... the devil[12], or throw him out

1. *Compost* (etymologically = compound), manure; which a relapse into "corruption" (cp. l. 159) would resemble in nature and effects. With what immediately follows cp. again I, II, 135-137.

2. *The fatness of these pursy times.* Cp. I, II, 136 once more, and, here, lines 92 and 179.—"*Pursy*" = Fr. "*poussif*," breathing with difficulty, here from excess of fat.

3. *Curb* = bow; cp. Fr. "faire des *courbettes*."

4. *Worser*, II, I, 11.

5. *A*. Such prompt generalising seems the more significant because one definite virtue has been, and remains, so vividly present to Hamlet's mind. Cp. e. g. I, IV, 23-38.

6. *Sense*, l. 38.—*Eat*, devour, monster-like.

7. *Of habits devil*, that rules devil-like (cp. l. 37), over habits.

8. *Use*, practising.

9. *Frock*, in the sense of upper garment, long and ample. Playing on words was, with the Elizabethans, so instinctive (cp. the Ghost itself, p. 48 n. 7) that the metaphor well may have been suggested by one of the senses of *habit* (*Clar.*).

10. *Aptly*, "easily, because it fits well" (Schmidt).

11. In Florio's translation of Montaigne (pub. 1603, *bk. III, ch. X*) Sh. may have read that "*custom* (i. e. *use*, here) *is a second nature and not less potent.*"—*Stamp*; cp. I, IV, 31.

12. Q^1, our only authority for "*the next more easy—wondrou*

With wondrous potency. Once more, good night :
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you[1]. For this same[2] lord,
[*Pointing to Polonius.*
I do repent : but heaven hath pleas'd it so[3],
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their[4] scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer[5] well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind[6] :
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :
Let the blowt[7] king tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton[8] on your cheek, call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy[9] kisses,

potency," must have dropped some verb (probably of one syllable, and more or less antithetic to "throw him out"). "House" and "lodge" are among those suggested accordingly. Other editors insert *master,* on the uncertain authority of one quarto (1611), which, laming the line differently, prints *And Maister.*

1. *Desirous to be blest,* being contrite and having shown it by your conduct.—*I,* emphatic, like "*you.*"

2. *Same* (accompanied by an explanatory gesture; cp. V, II, 392), reinforces, rather contemptuously here, the demonstrative.

3. *Do*; the metrical stress emphasizes the avowal, though what immediately follows will be almost enough to indicate the degree of "repentance."—*Heaven... so* = it has pleased heaven to ordain it so. For the sentiment expressed, cp. in V, II, chiefly 217-8.

4. *Their.* "Heaven," being what, in some languages, is called, a noun of majesty, is sometimes referred to by Sh. as plural. Cp. p. 70 n. 1.

5. *Answer* = render account of (*O*); cp. IV, I, 16.

6. This and the following line are marked off, as spoken aside, by rhyming. Cp. I, V, 189-190.

7. *Blowt.* Q^2 = soft-bodied, puffed, bloated (*O.*). Partly from over-drinking is, in the case of Claudius (I, IV, 8-10), one obvious implication.—Warburton it was (cp. Appendix *B*) that substituted a somewhat later form of the word, "*bloat,*" universally adopted since.

8. *Wanton,* to be construed, it seems, as if standing between commas.

9. *Reechy* (like "reeky") first meant smoky, hence squalid, and also rancid. One is reminded of Coriolanus (III, III, 121), likening the breath of the populace to "*reek* (i. e. vapour) *of the rotten fens.*"

Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out[1],
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft[2]. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober[3], wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib[4],
Such dear concernings[5] hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy[6],
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape[7],
To try conclusions, in the basket[8] creep
And break your own neck down[9].

Queen. Be thou assur d, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe[10]
What thou hast said to me[11].

Ham. I must to England; you know that?[12]

1. *To*, then frequent before an infinitive after "make", in the *active* voice as in the passive.—*Ravel out*, unweave, disentangle, make clear.

2. *That* : so as to show that.—*Essentially* = really (no other instance in *N. E. D.*).—*In* = in a state of.

3. *Sober*, here : not giving way to the intoxication of sensual passion, chaste.

4. *Paddock* = toad, a loathsomely gross-looking, "*blowt*," creature, and then held to be venomous.—The *bat* is a dubious, sinister, creature of the dark.—*Gib* (short for Gilbert), gib-cat = tom-cat (French "*matou*"), an animal of no better fame than the peacock (p. 134, n.-6.)—*Clar.* observes, besides, that toads, bats, and cats were supposed to be familiars of witches; which implied acquaintance with *their* mistresses' secrets. As regards Claudius's appearance, cp. e. g. II, II, 361.

5. *Dear*, important because they "concern" the said dear toad and bat and gib so *nearly*.—*Concernings*, "matters" that concern.

6. *Sense*, reason, common sense.—*Secrecy*, due and implicitly promised.

7. *Ape*, of whose "fame" Shakespearean commentators have discovered no very definite trace outside the present passage.

8. *Conclusions* = experiments from which conclusions will be drawn. The experiment here must be flying like "*the birds.*"—*In the basket*, into (cp. 95) the basket from which the birds themselves had started.

9. *Down* by the fall.—How exactly, the Queen's betrayal of Hamlet's secret would have involved her in ruin, matters little. More significant is the grimly detached tone of this appeal of a son to his mother's instinct of *self*-preservation at least.

10. *Breathe*; cp. II, I, 44.

11. In Q^1, more definite progress was made (Introd. p. XVII).

12. *Must to*; cp. p. 115 n. 6 and

Queen. Alack, 200
I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on[1].
Ham. There's[2] letters seal'd : and my two school-fellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd[3],
They[4] bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work; 205
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer[5]
Hoist with his own petar[6] : and it shall go hard[7]
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at[8] the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,[9]
When in one line two crafts directly meet. 210
This man shall set me packing[9].

Appendix *J.*—*You know* from the king, no doubt; but how does Hamlet know also? Sh. has not troubled to tell us.

1. *On* (i. e. about) would not be used quite thus after "*conclude*" now.

2. *There's*; cp. p. 141 n. 12. Apart from which, *letters* is scarcely plural.

3. *Fang'd*, "with their poisonous teeth undrawn" (*J.*).

4. *They*, inserted, as the repetition will make plainer, for the sake, not of clearness only, but of incisiveness also.

5. *Enginer* (with the main accent on the first) = engineer (which has the main accent on the last). Cp. "*pioner*" I, v, 163.

6. *Hoist* (= hoised, past participle of the obsolete "*hoise*"; cp. Fr. "hisser"—or hoisted, from the still existing "*hoist*") here = blown up.—*Pĕtar'*, an engine, made like a bell or mortar, and filled with explosives, used especially for blowing up gates. This was the sense of the French word also; and, according to Agrippa d'Aubigné, actively interested in matters of this kind, "*ces pétards qui ont fait tant parler d'eux*" had come into frequent use only since the last decade of the XVIth century.

7. *And it.* Q^2, our only authority for 202-210, summarily prints *an't* (in Act. IV, VI, F^2 has "*and't please*"). Audible harshness *here* fits the thought. — *Shall*, much like "must." Only meeting with difficulties *hard* indeed to overcome can prevent me. Cp. p. 136 n. 7.

8. *At* = up to (Abbott), owing to some half-assimilation of "blow" to "shoot" (Franz); which would be another touch of grim humour.

9. *Most sweet*; in the same vein as e. g. III, III, 89-93.

9. *Shall*, cp. p. 115, n. 8.—*Set me*, compel me to begin.—*Packing* (familiar); taking myself off with my belongings, even more swiftly (IV, I, 29-30; III, 41-42) than it was first meant I should do. Cp. "to send somebody packing" i. e. to dismiss him summarily. To *pack* might also then (perhaps through derivation from, or influence of, "*pact*") mean to conspire, or to contrive (though always, it seems, with some confederate); and commentators of weight have supposed

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room[1].
Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw[2] toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

[*Exit Hamlet, tugging in Polonius*[3].

ACT IV[4].

Scene I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter King *and* Queen *with* Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern.

King. There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves[5]:
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them[6].

this to be *one* of the senses here. But does Hamlet conspire? or even contrive anything before he leaves Denmark?

1. *Lug* (whence "luggage"), drag with effort and, of course, unceremoniously altogether.—*The guts.*—"*Claybrained guts*," Prince Hal calls Falstaff (*First Part of Henry IV*, II, iv, 215); and corpulency (cp. "*lug*" and presently *tug*), with the gluttony which it is populary supposed to imply, is certainly meant (cp. 153 and note). The further sense of "offal" (II, ii, 580) seems not impossible here (*O*).—*Neighbour* = neighbouring.—As regards what Hamlet actually does, see p. 165 n. 4.

2. *To draw*, with a play on the word; for the construction cp. III, ii, 328.

3. *Good night, mother*; one more pathetic repetition of the exhortation and appeal (170, 7, 213); cp. the repetitions and returns in the interview with Ophelia, pp. 112-4.—*Exit... Polonius.* The wording of this stage-direction is F's; *in* = within, behind the arras, p. 78 n. 3.

4. *Act IV.* As Johnson already observed, the division here, found first in a very late quarto, that of 1676, corresponds to *no* break in the action. The Queen, having gone out to seek the king as soon as Hamlet had left her, has apparently met him, with the pair of courtiers, in a gallery, from which she enters some royal apartment with them. Cp. p. 177 n. 1.

5. *Profound*; for the accent apparently cp. p. 45 n. 11.—*Heaves* = heavings of the breast.

6. *Translate*, interpret.—*We* (in regal style; cp. e. g. 15) should

Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us[1] a little while.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
Ah, mine own[2] lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen[3]. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which[4] is the mightier : in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out[5] his rapier, cries ' A rat, a rat! '
And in this brainish apprehension[6] kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy[7] deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there :
His liberty[8] is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd[9]?
It will be laid to us, whose providence[10]
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt[11],
This mad young man : but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging[12], let it feed
Ev'n on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd :

1. *Bestow on us* : grant us, leave us for ourselves alone.

2. *Mine*, p. 144, n. 8; *own*, spoken in clinging tenderness.

3. *Queen*, true to her promise in the scene before, 197-139, and making ingenious use of the supposed madness.

4. *Which* = to find which.

5. *Whips out*, draws as swiftly as one might give a lash with a whip. For the construction (F. tamely has " He whips his rapier out ") cp. III, I, 8.

6. *Brainish*, headstrong, passionate (*O*). Palsgrave (*Esclarcissement de la Langue Francoise*, 1530) gives *testu* (i. e. *qui en croit et fait à sa tête*) for " brainish, heady, foolish, self-willed. "—*Apprehension* = imagination, fancy.

7. *Heavy*, grievous.

8. *His liberty*, the fact that he is at liberty.

9. *Answer'd*; cp. 32 and p. 159 n. 5.

10. *Us*, our account.—*Providence* : regal (p. 185 n. 6) and timely care.

11. *Kept short*; cp. Fr. " *tenir de court.* "—*Out of haunt* = in seclusion; *haunt*, here, meaning public resort, society of men.

12. *Divulging*, being divulged.

O'er whom his very madness, like some ore[1]
Among a mineral[2] of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done[3].
King[4]. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains[5] touch,
But we will ship him hence : and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance[6] and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid[7] :
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done....[8]

1. *Ore* = precious metal.

2. *Mineral*=mine, as in a couple of other instances of the time, given in *N. E. D.*

3. *Pure* was understood by Schmidt intellectually : " as having a clear perception of what has happened. " The moral sense, " innocent of any criminal purpose, " seems at once more natural in itself and in much closer keeping with what immediately follows.—*Weeps for what is done.* Hamlet's behaviour to the " good old man, " when alive, l. 31-33, 172-177, 211-216 of the preceding scene, the whole of sc. II, and 18-38 of sc. III, appear to be sufficient evidence that we are to take this for fact as little as the ascription of Polonius's murder to a " brainish " fit of amateur rat-killing.

4. *King*, too perceptive (cp. III, i, 162) to be reassured.

5. *The mountains* of Sh.'s Elsinore. Cp. I, iv, 70.

6. *Countenance*, support, shield at least from proper punishment.

7. *Go... aid* = go and get others to assist you; cp. directions (substantially Q^2's) after l. 4 of next scene and at l. 11 of sc. III, also p. 168 n. 3. F., however, with its usual economy (cp. Introd. p. xx) brings on the stage, in either scene only the inevitable pair,

8. *Untimely*, strictly " at an inconvenient time, ; " a born politician's (cp. p. 171 n. 1) euphemism —After " *done*, " F goes on, at once, with " *Oh come away* " and l. 45; Q^2, using *perhaps* a damaged copy (cp. III, iv, 169), with " *Whose whisper* " etc. Theo

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter[1],
As level[2] as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name
And hit the woundless[3] air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt.* 45

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle*[4].

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Safely[5] stowed.

Ros. } [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
Guil. }

Ham. But soft, what noise? who calls on[6] Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN *and others.*

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body? 5

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin[7].

bald (pilloried by Pope for having explicitly undertaken to correct *his* edition of Shakespeare, but a scholarly and most ingenious emendator) conjectured "*For, haply* (III, I, 174), *slander*; " which most editors have adopted, only altering "for " to "*so.*"

1. *O'er the world's diameter* probably means no more than from one point of the globe to its extreme opposite.

2. *As level,* with aim as direct, as exact.—*Blank,* white spot in the centre of a target, exact mark aimed at. For the nature of the comparison, see p. 24 n. 5.

3. *Woundless,* "invulnerable," I, I, 145.

4. *Enter Hamlet,* who, as his very first words will imply and the sequel shows, has "*lugged*" the body much farther away than the room next to his mother's; cp. l. 6.

5. *Safely,* where one can hardly discover it, until I choose to tell. —To some such "*antic*" hide-and-seek (30) the grossly macabre earnest of the old story (Introd. p. VI) had, no doubt, been toned down already in the pre-Shakespearean play.

6. *Soft,* I, I, 126.—*On* = for.

7. *Whereto 'tis kin,* for man, and *that* sort of man especially, is but the "quintessence of *dust,*" II, II, 306-7. The answer is intentionally ambiguous, the dust in this case being that, not of the grave,

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham[1]. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own[2]. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge[3], what replication[4] should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you[5] me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance[6], his rewards, his authorities[7]. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps[8] in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—[9]

as usual for a "*dead body*", but of some out of the way, "*upstairs,*" corner of the castle.

1. *Hamlet*, breaking off into prose. —For the trick of puzzling abruptness, cp. III, II, 303.

2. *Keep your counsel*, keep your secret purpose, or inmost thought, secret. If there is any definite reference, it would seem to be to their confession, so far back as II, II, 290.—*Mine own*, p. 144 n. 8.

3. *Demanded*, questioned (here, as now always) more or less authoritatively.—*Of* = by, as e. g. in I, I, 25, III, I, 157, and frequently, even in prose, later.—*Sponge*; the punctuation (that of all early editions) implies that "*to be*" = in case of being.; cp. p. 135 n. 7. A xviiith editor was the first to substitute an exclamation-mark for the "tripping" comma (cp. III, II, 2 n.).

4. *Replication*, a mockingly affected, reverberating, synonym of rejoinder. "*Facere*, as it were, replication," quoth the pedant Holofernes, in his half-Latin jargon (*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, II, 15).

5. *Take you*, more emphatic, because more direct, than "do you take;" cp. *passim* and e. g. "I understand you not" 1. 21.

6. *Countenance*; cp. p. 164 n. 6.

7. *Authorities* = offices of authority.

8. *Sleeps*: remains inactive, ineffectual (because not understood).

9. *The body... the body.* Hamlet is designedly talking nonsense,

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing[1]: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after[2]. [*Exeunt*[3]. 30

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter KING, *attended.*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law[4] on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted[5] multitude,
Who like not in[6] their judgement, but their eyes:
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge[7] is weigh'd,
But never the offence[8]. To bear all smooth and even,

according to *Clarendon*, Furness, and others (arguing from the impossibility of making sure of any meaning). From the earliest form of the story, however, speech that, while it seems nonsense, is truth, characterizes the hero's feigned madness; and why should Shakespeare, just here, give up playing the game? One XVIIIth century commentator, Jennens, proposed to understand: "the body is" *in the palace* "with the king, but the king is *not*" *in the same room* "with the body." Cp. M. Derocquigny's still apter "*Le corps est chez le roi; mais le roi n'a pas mis la main dessus,*" *Introd. p. XVI*; which not only has the advantage of comparative simplicity, but assists in making the phrase sound as if borrowed from some child's game (29-30).—*Thing*— Thus F.; Hamlet apparently pauses, in quest of some annihilating phrase. *Thing*, however, though not necessarily scornful even now, lacks reverence; and the tone in which it is uttered is probably expressive enough to account for Guildenstern's wondering, discreetly shocked, query.

1. *Of nothing* = worth nothing; cp. in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV, II, 14, the alternative phrase "thing of nought" i. e. morally worthless; cp. p. 112 n. 5.

2. *Hide fox* (for construction cp. III, II, 195) *and all after* seems to have been a signal cry, in some old form of the game of hide-and-seek." The fox, in the present case, is Polonius, that past master of "indirection" (II, I, 64-5); cp. also p. 169 n. 5.

3. *Exeunt*, Hamlet running off the stage (*V.*).

4. *The strong law*: the law in all its strength or rigour.

5. *Distracted* = out of their senses, mad; cp. III, I, 5.

6. *In*, causal (Franz); here practically much like "through" in the sense of "by using."

7. *The offender's scourge*, the punishment with which the offender is lashed, as it were.

8. *Never the offence*. Thus, Q^2 and F, though, in l. 6 both

This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause [1]: diseases desperate grown
By desperate[2] appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and all the rest.*

How now! what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.
King. But where is he?
Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.
King. Bring him before us.
Ros. Ho! bring in the lord[3].

They enter.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?
Ham. At supper.
King. At supper! where?
Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him[4]. Your worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots :

printed *th'offender* (cp. Avant-Propos, n. 1).

1. *Deliberate pause*, the reverse of inconsiderate haste.

2. *Desperate*, significantly emphasized (and, in consequence, more deliberately trisyllabic than in the preceding line).

3. Thus Q[2] (except for *How* instead of *Ho!*), our authority also for the following stage-direction; Hamlet will enter " guarded, " as in l. 14. Cp. p. 164 n. 7 and Introd. p. XII n. 6.

4. *Convocation* (a fine Latin word) is, in the sense of assembly, ecclesiastical (or academical); whence partly, perhaps, the qualifying epithet to " worms. "—*Politic*, for such a politician's corpse could breed no others.—*Worms*, with punning allusion, it has been *supposed*, to the " diets " (cp. next line) held at Worms. At one of them, in 1521, Luther had been placed under the ban of the Empire (cp. *perhaps* " emperor. ")—*E'en*, I, II, 218.

your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable[1] service, two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat[2] of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress[3] through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him in the other place[4] yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose[5] him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till ye come. [*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done[6], must send thee hence
With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready and the wind at help[7],

1. *Fat king*, or even "blowt king," III, iv, 182.—*Variable*, affording variety at will. Commentators have compared Montaigne's "*c'est le desjeuner d'un petit ver, que le cœur et la vie d'un grand et triumphant empereur*" (II, xii, *Apologie de Raimond Sebond*).—For *your* in all this passage, cp. e. g. III, ii, 3.

2. *Hath eat.* The (then frequent) identity of form of the past participle and the infinitive has, here, an obvious advantage.—*And eat.* Q1 has and "a beggar eat:" which makes 30-1 a mere variation.

3. *Progress* was the technical word for state (i. e. solemn) journeys of sovereigns and was thus quite familiar to the subjects of Elizabeth and of her successor.

4. III, iii, 95.

5. *Shall*, as a most certain consequence.—*Nose*, as hounds might do a "fox" (cp. preceding scene, 29).

6. *Thine*; cp. III, iii, 55 n.—*Tender*, I, iii, 107.—*Dearly* "deeply, keenly," (*O*), coming after *tender*, illustrates the confusion pointed out in n. 1 p. 28.—As regards the solemnly cautious balancing of thought and phrase, cp. Claudius's very first speech in I, ii.

7. *Bark*, comparatively small ship.—*At help* (*Sh*) = in the right quarter to help. Cp., on the one hand, such phrases as "*at ebb*" and, on the other, "*at friend*" = on terms of friendship (*Winter's*

The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England[1].

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.[2]

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub[3] that sees them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother : father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh[4]; and so, my mother. Come, for England[5]! [*Exit.*

King. Follow him at foot, tempt him with speed aboard[6];
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night :
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans[7] on the affair : pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught[8] —
As my great power thereof may give thee sense[9],

Tale, V, I, 140).

1. *Tend*, I, III, 83.—*Is bent* = is ready, like a bow *bent* to shoot in a certain direction.—*For England*, introduced in a way that recalls (not rhythmically only) the "taken to wife" of I, II, 14. Hamlet, rightly trusting his mother not to have told that he somehow knew, will feign surprise.

2. *Good*; secretly in the spirit of III, IV, 205-210.

3. *Cherub*. Mr. Verity, in a most interesting note, has pointed out that power of *vision*, both material and spiritual, distinguished the Cherubim among the Heavenly Hierarchies.

4. *One flesh*. Among the passages from the Scripture read at the close of the Church of England marriage service, figures part of the fifth chapter of St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*, with the phrase, "*and they two shall be one flesh.*"

5. *For England!* See Appendix J.

6. *At foot* = "at heel" = at his heels.—As to scansion, Rowe it was that first made one line of the original two short ones. At that date (p. 1 n. 1), slurring the first *him* would be implied (cp. Douady).

7. *Every thing... That else leans* = every thing else that bears.

8. *England*; cp. "Denmark," I, II, 125.—*At aught* = at the price of anything, at (i. e. as having) any value: contrast "set at nought."

9. *As* = as indeed. Claudius is the man of significant parentheses, and this use of "*as*" seems, in fact, in his case, almost a distinctive

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe[1]
Pays homage to us[2]—thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process[3]; which imports at full[4],
By letters congruing to that effect[5],
The present[6] death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic[7] in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun[8]. [*Exit.*

trick of thought and speech. Cp. sc. VII, 157 and Hamlet's parody of his uncle's royal style in V, II, 39-43. —*Thereof... sense,* feeling of that, i. e. the value of "*my love.*"

1. *Cicatrice,* more technical and impressive than "scar."—*The Danish sword*; an echo of the savage Danish invasions of the IXth, Xth, and XIth centuries.—*Free,* because no longer enforced by actual application of the sword. "*Free awe*" is a most diplomatic phrase.

2. *Pays homage.* Book VII of Holinshed's *Chronicles* (the 2d edition of which was repeatedly utilised by Sh.) told, in detail, how, in those "tumultuous and tyrannic times" heavier and heavier "tribute" (cp. V, II, 39) was, again and again, exacted by the Danes as the price of leaving off "wasting and harrying "England.

3. *Thou mayst not coldly set* = this does not allow thee to estimate (cp. "*set* at a pin's fee," I, IV, 65) with coldness.—*Process* appears to mean here command, formally set forth; cp. "*mandate,*" III, IV, 204.

4. *Imports,* I, II, 23.—*At full* : fully set forth.

5. *Letters,* a plural (of Latin origin; "*litteræ*" = "epistola") still used, in English as in French, in certain legal or official phrases, and adding solemnity (cp. IV, VII, 37 n.),—*Congruing* (accented on the first, here) Q^2; a very infrequent, and proportionately solemn, synonym of "agreeing" (*O. F.* also had "*congruer,*" Lat. *congruere*), not adding much to the sense. F. has "*conjuring*" (cp. V, II, 38).

6. *Present* = immediate. Cp. V, II, 45-47.

7. *The hectic* (i. e. habitual) fever that accompanies such wasting diseases as e. g. consumption.

8. *Howe'er my haps* = of whatever kind (i. e. here, however fortunate) events happening to me may prove. "*Haps*" is found, even in prose, later, but mostly in the sense of "*mis*haps."—*Were... begun* (F.). Q^3 has, both tamely and rhymelessly, *will nere begin.*

Scene IV[1].

Enter Fortinbras, *a* Captain, *and* Soldiers, *marching*[2].

Fort. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him that by his license[3] Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom[4]. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us[5],
We shall express our duty in his eye[6];
And let him know so.
Capt. I will do it, my lord.
Fort. Go softly on. [*Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers*[7].

Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, *etc.*[8]

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?[9]
Capt. They are of[10] Norway, sir.

1. *A plain in Denmark* is the now usual indication; "somewhere near Elsinore", all that we can actually guess or Shakespeare's audience cared to understand. Cp. p. 2 n. 9.

2. *Marching*, with colours, of course, and "*drum*" (Q[1]); cp. pp. 253-4.

3. *By his license*; cp. II, II, 76-80.

4. *Craves* expresses urgent need of the performing of the promise and thus humility, the formal expression of which would not be lost on Claudius. Not so, "*claims*" (F).—*Conveyance.* Q[2] has "a free pass (cp. II, II, 77) and *conduct*;" and "safety" (ibid. 79; cp. note 7 on *softly*) well may mean convoy, or escort, that shoud now join Fortinbras, at "*ihe rendez-vous*" also, for instance.—*Over*, from side to side of.

5. *If that* = if it so happen that. —*Would aught with* = should wish to have any intercourse with.

6. *Express our duty* = Fr. *rendre nos devoirs.*—*In his eye* well may have been often used then for "in his royal presence" Cp. Claudius's own words in I, II, 116, and, presently, Hamlet's mocking echo, IV, VII, 44-45.

7. *Softly* (to the Soldiers) = slowly; cp. Fr. *doucement.* F. has *safely.*—Q[2] is our only authority (with the quartos that reproduce it) for the rest of the scene, the philosophical interest of which is palpable (and the psychological, acute), but which solves explicitly no problem and advances the action not at all.

8. *Etc.*, so that Hamlet is now far from "*going loose*" (l. 2 of scene before), in the sense of being unwatched at least. Cp. Appendix *J*.

9. *Good sir* (cp. I, v, 119); Hamlet will show most attentive courtesy throughout the dialogue with this congenially detached "captain."—*Powers* = armed forces.

10. *Of Norway* = powers "" of the King (I, I, 61) of Norway.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?
Capt. Against some part of Poland.
Ham. Who commands them, sir?
Capt. The nephew to[1] old Norway, Fortinbras.
Ham. Goes it against the main[2] of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
Capt. Truly to speak, and with no addition[3],
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay[4] five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee[5].
Ham. Why, then the Polack[6] never will defend it.
Capt. Yes, it is already garrison'd.
Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw[7]:
This is the imposthume[8] of much wealth and peace,

1. *To*, III, II, 232.

2. *Main* (cp. II, II, 56) = main "part (12)", not just the border, not "some frontier."—*Goes it?* a touch of easy directness (cp. p. 166 n. 5.).

3. *Addition* to the truth.—The line will not scan; perhaps *and* should be dropped, *addition* counting as quadrisyllabic, like e. g., "probation," I, I, 156.

4. *To pay* (cp. III, II, 278) = if I had to pay (a rent of)—.*Farm*, take on lease, rent.

5. *Ranker* (cp. I, II, 136): more exorbitant.—*Rate* = price.—*In fee*, technically termed fee-*simple*, i. e. absolute, possession; contrast *farm*, 20.

6. *The Polack*, like *the Pole*, 21; cp. I, I, 15.

7. *Debate*, fight to decide.—After *straw* (cp. "not worth a straw straw"), Q^1 has no punctuation whatever; and the colon, or semi-colon, generally adopted gives no indication of the tone. If it expresses half-incredulous astonishment, *will* is emphatic (*V.*), and *will not* means it cannot be that they intend to. Stressed as usual, *will not*, here, apparently means will not *be enough to*. But what does Hamlet know of the *number* of "souls" and "ducats" actually, or likely to be, engaged? Though arithmetic exactness is obviously not the point, the objection favours the proposal that 23-4, though metrically detached from 22, should also be given to the Captain, from whom they would sound naturally, in every respect. In this connection, note the absence of (at least explicit) transition and the difference of ring (if not certainly of voice) between (these two lines and 25.

8. *Imposthume* (better spelt in

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.
Capt. God be wi' you,[1] sir. [*Exit.*
Ros. Will it please you go, my lord?
Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*
How all occasions do inform[2] against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of[3] his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse[4], 35
Looking before and after[5], gave us not
That capability and god-like[6] reason
To fust in us unus'd[7]. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple[8]
Of thinking too precisely on the event[9], 40

Q[1] "impostume"; *O. F. empostume*), purulent swelling, abscess.

1. *Be wi'* stands for Q[2]'s *buy*, as in II, i, 68; ii, 546.

2. *Occasions*, incidents, chance events.—*Inform*, in the sense of bearing accusatory testimony before a magistrate.

3. *Market of* : that for which he sells, what he purchases with (as if at market); the use he makes of.

4. *Discourse* cp. I, ii, 150. *Discours* is repeatedly thus used by Montaigne; and "discourse," consequently, by Florio (p. 158 n. 11).

5. *Looking before and after*. The grand simplicity of the phrase parallels (as was observed by Theobald; p. 164 n. 8) the Homeric ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω λεύσσει (said, in the *Iliad*, III, 109-110, of old age), which, in Pope's sonorously antithetic rendering, became

Sees what befell and what may yet befall.

6. *Capability* (contrast, presently, the monosyllabic *fust*), capacity.—*God-like*, II, ii, 304.

7. *To fust* (still used at the end of the XVIIth cent.), to become fusty (*O. Fr.* "*fusté*", in the sense of "*sentant le fust*"=Mod. *fût*), to grow mouldy.—*Unus'd* for action. That revenge on his "uncle-father" (II, ii, 373), body *and* soul, would be a right "use" of this "large," this "*godlike*," gift, Sh.'s Hamlet never explicitly questions, even to himself, any more than Saxo's Amleth did.

8. *Bestial*; cp. 34.—*Oblivion*, "really the shrinking of his unconscious from the very subject of revenge, which expresses itself, to the conscious, in forgetfulness" (Clutton-Brock).—*Craven*, confessing defeat before the fight, abjectly pusillanimous.—*Scruple*, super-subtle reason for hesitation.

9. *Of*; either consisting of; or, less naturally it seems, resulting from (*Clar.*); cp. French.—*The event*: the issue. Some external obstacles were, it has been observed, implied in the "*Now* might I do it pat" of

A thought which, quarter'd[1], hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward[2], I do not know[3]
Why yet I live to say ' This thing's to do[4];
Sith[5] I have cause and will and strength and means
To do it. Examples gross[6] as earth exhort me :
Witness this army of such mass[7] and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender[8] prince,
Whose spirit with divine[9] ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event[10],

III, III, 73; cp. Introd. p. XII n. 6.

1. *Quarter'd*, divided into four equal parts.

2. *Ever.* Hamlet would not be himself if he did not generalise.—*Coward*; cp., in the earlier, parallel, monologue, II, II, 570.

3. *I do not know*; a most unusual confession to be made in an Elizabethan soliloquy (a device by which, " any curious bit of human nature is labelled, any devious path in the intrigue placarded ", for the benefit of the audience). The remark is Prof. Stoll's, who, however, has, again and again, energetically minimised the psychological significance of the present passage; for, he argues, will not the most practical person in the world, now and then, say " I don't know why I haven't done that "? Not skilled enough in psychological analysis to imagine causes of delay, when scarcely any traces of external obstacles (cp. Introd. as in n. 9 p. 174) were left in the play, Sh. just relied on the instinctive fallacy that the confessedly inexplicable is all the more like reality (*Sh. Studies*, 1927).—But would such a very bald expedient have attained, after all, even the end alleged? Unknown as both the word " subconscious " and the psychological concept for which it stands were to Sh., as to his audience (*ibid.*), little recognised as the dimmer regions of the soul might then be, does not the present passage, almost explicitly, point in that direction? Cp. p. 174 n. 8.

4. *To do* = still to be done.

5. *Sith*, II, II, 6.—*Cause and will and strength and means.* What indeed (cp. n. 3) could be more emphatically explicit?

6. *Gross* : Fr. " *gros.* "

7. *Mass*, solid bulk; here, close numbers.—*Charge*, expense.

8. *Tender* (cp. the obsolete phrase " tender of age ") = of tender years, it seems; and, if so, one might be tempted to conclude that the speaker is decidedly older than " young Fortinbras. " But the laxness of Shakespearean technique in matters of this sort has to be taken into account (Cp. Ap. *K.*)

9. *Divine.* The epithet is in character—the character of the prince described. Hamlet, for the moment (contrast 25-6), with a suppleness by no means foreign to his nature, almost, in Mr. Clutton Brock's phrase, " dramatizes himself as Fortinbras ".—*Puff'd*, on the other hand, is much in the spirit of " the melancholy Jaques, " describing (*As You Like It*, II, VII, 149-153) the soldier, *jealous in honour,...*

Seeking the bubble reputation
Ev'n in the cannon's mouth.

10. *Mouths*, derisive grimaces, as with the mouth.—*Event*, 40.

Exposing what is mortal and unsure[1]
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an[2] egg-shell. Rightly[3] to be great
Is not to stir without great argument[4],
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw[5]
When honour's at the stake[6]. How stand I[7] then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood[8],
And let all sleep? while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty[9] thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame[10],
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot[11]
Whereon the numbers[12] cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent[13]
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth![14] [*Exit.*

1. *Unsure* : insecure.

2. *Even for an* = for a mere; p. 11 n. 9.

3. *Rightly*, in the *right* sense of the word, truly.

4. *Not* (stressed) qualifies "*is.*"—*Argument* = subject of "debate" (cp. 26).

5. *Greatly*, in the "right" (53), the true spirit of greatness.—*Straw*, resumed from 24.

6. *At the stake* = at stake.

7. *How stand I*, what is my position?

8. *Reason and blood*; cp. III, II, 64.

9. *Twenty*. Only a responsible War Secretary would need to try and reconcile the figure here with that in l. 23.

10. *Trick*, here = trifle (*O.*). Another Elizabethan meaning, closely associated, is "bauble." "Deceptive appearance" (*Clar.*) is a third interpretation, in plausible connection with "fantasy."—*Of fame*, governed by both "fantasy" and "trick."

11. *Plot*, small piece of ground.

12. *The numbers* : such numbers of men as are engaged to fight.

13. *Continent*, substantive = that which contains, like Fr. "*le contenant*;" a use not special to Sh.

14. Let all my thoughts be of blood, or they will be worthless.—In Act V, however, Hamlet will express no such *thoughts* before sc. II (which itself will comprise the interlude with Osric and end in "revenge," at last, through no planning of *his*).

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle*[1].

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, *and a* Gentleman[2].

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract[3]:
Her mood will needs be[4] pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Gent. She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks in the world, and hems and beats her heart,
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt[5],
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

1. *Scene V.* During the interval (contrast p. 162 n. 4) not only has Ophelia had time to lose her reason, and Laertes both to return from France and, for a while, to "keep himself in clouds" (l. 71), but (since the following scene is, chronologically, a mere parenthesis between two parts of a conversation) Hamlet has left for England, has been captured in the course of the second day at sea (VI, 15), and has come back. On the other hand, there will be no considerable break in the action down to the end of the play, when Fortinbras will return also, from his Polish expedition. Indefiniteness as to time (as well as place) was indeed, among the "facilities" (Wm. Archer, *The Old Drama and the New*, 1923) of Elizabethan technique. Cp. p. 2 col. 2.

2. This *Gentleman*, F. economically suppresses (cp. Introd. p. xx, n. 1 and 2), giving his speeches to Horatio and l. 14-15 to the Queen. As to *Horatio's* presence at her side, it has been unsentimentally explained (J. M. Robertson) by the lack of any other courtier, known to us and now available. Some influence of the pre-Shakespearean play (Introd. p. xvi) and the degree of understanding between mother and son now, even in the Shakespearean version (cp. sc. I, 7 and 27 n.), may account for it as well.

3. *Importunate*; and thus how unlike her former self! As to Gertrude's unwillingness to see her now, cp. p. 150 n. 4.—*Distract.* For the form, see p. 114 n. 7; for the sense, p. 167 n. 6.

4. *Will needs be*, will necessarily be, must be.

5. *Spurns enviously at straws* = kicks *spitefully* (cp. sc. VII, 174) at mere nothings (cp. p. 173 n. 8); some sudden startled hostile movement of the foot is certainly meant. Cp. Antony, in anger, spurning "the rush that lies before him," as he walks (*Ant. and Cleo*, III, v, 17). Note also "hems and beats her heart" just before; cf. p. 59 n. 2. —*In doubt* = ambiguous; cp. "some doubtful phrase," I, v, 175.

Yet the unshaped[1] use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it[2],
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts[3];
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield[4] them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought[5],
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily[6].

Hor. 'Twere good she were[7] spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding[8] minds.

Queen. Let her come in[9]. [*Exit Gentleman.*
[*Aside*] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss[10]:
So full of artless jealousy[11] is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt[12].

1. *Unshaped*, shapeless. — With *nothing* (8) cp. III, II, 90.

2. *Collection* = inference, in quite a number of xvith and xviith cent. instances; but here, it seems, with the idea of a preliminary ordering, a *construing*, as it were (cp. *Cymbeline*, V, v, 432-3), of Ophelia's distracted thoughts; cp. Dowden.— *Aim* had been used in the sense of guessing for three centuries; *aim at it* = guess at what it all may mean.

3. *Botch... up*, patch up, piece together, more or less clumsily.— *Fit* (adj.) *to* : so as to make them fit (verb).

4. *Yield*, give forth, present.

5. *Thought* (i. e. sense) after *think* may be a subtlety.

6. If the *Gentleman* had dared to speak out, he would have said that people dimly guessed some great misfortune to have befallen her (*Clar's*. psychological interpretation of this obscurely "'shaped" line).

7. *She*, neither stressed, of course, *nor* to be crushed into one syllable with *were*.

8. *Ill-breeding* : conceiving mischief.

9. *Let her come in.* Q^1 gives these words to Horatio; but the Queen's total passiveness, to the point of giving no order herself, seems improbable.

10. *Toy* = trifle.—*Prologue*; cp. note on I, I, 123.—*Amiss* (a rare, but not unexampled, substantival use) = misfortune. The gnomic character of 18-21 (cp. III, I, 46-49), partly (cp. however p. 60 n. 3) marked by their being rhymed, is further emphasized, in Q^2, by inverted commas (as in Q^1 (though with characteristic oversights) for Polonius's "precepts," corresponding, with gaps, to I, III, 61-80).

11. *Artless*, unskilful.—*Jealousy*, II, I, 112.

12. *Spills* = destroys (the original meaning).—*In fearing* = owing to the very fact that it fears, by fearing. Cp. p. 167 n. 7; p. 201 n. 6.

Re-enter Gentleman, *with* OPHELIA[1].

Oph. Where is the beauteous[2] majesty of Denmark?
Queen. How now[3], Ophelia!
Oph. [*Sings*]
How should I your true-love[4] know
From another one? —
By his cockle hat and staff[5],
And his sandal shoon[6].
Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what[7] imports this song?
Oph. Say you? nay, pray you[8], mark.
[*Sings*[9]] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

Oh, oh!
Queen. Nay[10], but, Ophelia,—

1. *Ophelia,* " playing on a lute, and her hair down, singing, " in Q^1 ; where l. 28-9 are not given .

2. *Beauteous* (cp. " plenteous "); abundantly, radiantly, beautiful.

3. *How now,* II, i. 73.

4. *True-love,* faithful lover.

5. *Cockle hat,* hat with a scallop shell (Fr. " *coquille Saint Jacques* ") stuck in it (in sign of a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of St. James of Compostela, in Galicia, on the shore of which the shell was supposed to have been found).—*Staff*: Fr. *bourdon.*

6. *Shoon,* a plural (archaic even then) of " shoe. " Sandals, staff, and cockle-hat characterize a pilgrim's garb.—When pilgrimages were in favour, Warburton comments, " love intrigues were carried on under this mask. " Cp., at any rate, Romeo's disguise at the ball, I, v.

7. *What imports this song?* What does this song signify (cp. III, ii, 125)?—" O, note (in the " snatches " of old ballads that Ophelia sings in this scene and, here and there, in her speech) the conjunction of these two thoughts that had never subsisted in disjunction, the love of Hamlet and her filial love, with the guileless floating on the surface of her pure imagination of the cautions so lately expressed, and the fears not too delicately avowed, by her father and brother, concerning the dangers to which her honour lay exposed. " (Coleridge).

8. *Say you?* Familiarly elliptic for " what say you? "—*Nay,* do not interrupt me.—*Pray you,* lighter than " I pray you "; cp. *say you?*

9. (*Sings*) to the same tune (Furness, who thinks it also part of the same ballad).

10. *Nay,* do not *go on* singing these things; cp. p. 3 n. 2.

Oph. Pray you, mark.
[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow[1],—

Enter KING.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.
Oph. [*Sings*]
Larded[2] with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did not go[3] 40
With true-love showers.
King. How do you[4], pretty lady?
Oph. Well, God 'ild[5] you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter[6]. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table[7]!

1. A four beat line, like 24 and 30.
2. *Larded* (originally, stuck all over as if with a larding pin; cp. V, II, 20) = richly strewn all over.
3. *Which*, by no means necessarily a neuter then; cp. e. g. IV, VII, 4. —*Did not go*. Thus, all editions before Pope (1725) smoothed down sense and metre by conjecturing "*did go*." Her own "*true-love showers*," at least, could hardly be wanting. But the "*not*" might come from sudden, jarring remembrance of the "hugger-mugger" burial (76) that her brother will so vehemently denounce (204-7); and the touch of peevishness would find some countenance in l. 7.
4. *Do you?* IV, II, 15.
5. *'Ild* = yield (some reward, in return for your kindness). The phrase is said to have been current then.
6. *Daughter*. "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop, where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him, but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, "*Heugh, heugh, heugh*;" which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird." (Douce, *Illustrations of Sh.*, pub. 1807, when the story was, he says, "common among the vulgar in Gloucestershire" and there "often related to children.") If, in accordance with the professionally mealy appearance of bakers and of their people, a "white owl" was meant, what now brings the story back to Ophelia's mind may be some recurrence of the mental picture of the white shroud of l. 35 and the colour of her own habit in this scene (Caldecott).
7. *We may be*, i. e. become, of course. But may not some dim sense of her disordered

King. Conceit upon her father[1]. 45

Oph. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this [2]:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day[3],
All in the morning betime[4],
And I a maid at your window[5], 50
To be your Valentine[6].

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on it[7] : 55

Quoth she,

You promis'd me to wed,

He answers :

So would I ha' done[8], by yonder sun,
And[9] thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient : but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him in the cold ground. My brother shall know of it :

state of mind account, partly at least, for the remark, as an unconscious corrective to the "*Well*" of l. 42?—*At your table!* a form of wish in accord with the story of the "*baker's* daughter."

1. *Conceit*, much as in II, II, 551 and 555, so that "conceit upon" = her imagination is at work about.—*Her father*; a comment justified both by "*daughter*" and by the general sense of catastrophe expressed in l. 43-44.

2. *This.* As to what may have subconsciously (end of n. 3 p. 175) recalled it, cp. end of n. 7 p. 179.

3. (*Sings*), to another tune. —*To-morrow*, the coming day.—*Saint Valentine's day*, the 14th of February.

4. *All*, adverbial, like Fr. *tout.* —*Betime*, in good time, early.

5. *Window*, accented, archaically, on the second; cp. *lady*, 30.

6. *Your Valentine*, i. e. your true-love, being the very first girl on whom your eyes shall rest. The choosing of sweethearts at that date (whether traceable or not to some Roman superstition) was not unknown to medieval France, survived in England much longer, and has left traces to this day.

7. *La* (not in Q^2) reinforces "indeed."—*Without an oath.* Elze quotes from another play, *The Puritan*, publ. 1607, "Where is Truly La, Indeed La, he that will not swear?".—*On* = of, as frequently then, especially before a monosyllabic pronoun slurred by rapidity of speech.

8. F's *ha'* (Q^2 cuts it down to *a*), seems all the more in its place here, if already vulgar in those days (cp. p. 99 n. 5).

9. *And*, I, v, 176.

and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come[1], my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [*Exit.*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [*Exit Horatio.*

O, this is[2] the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death[3]. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies[4],
But in battalions. First, her father slain:
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author[5]
Of his own just remove[6]: the people muddied[7],
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers[8],
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him[9]: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement[10],
Without the which we are[11] pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing[12] as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds[13],

1. *Come*, III, II, 276.

2. *O*, whether an actor's transitional flourish or not (cp. remark in n. 8, p. 143), may conveniently be classed as hypermetric (cp. Abbott § 512 end). Contracting *this is* into *this'*, for which high authority could be quoted, would sound, here, neither natural nor (before *the*) euphonious.

3. *Her father's death*; at whose hands (or even how, it seems) she did not know; cp. her brother's "wonder" (81) and her own "they say he made a good end" (177).

4. *Spies* = scouts; cp. p. 133 n. 1.

5. *And*, cp. 75 and p. 119 n. 8—*Author*, first cause.

6. *Remove*: removal.

7. *Muddied* like "troubled water."

8. *Thick*, i. e. turbid; and *unwholesome* may be meant to suggest the "bad blood" that the mysterious death of "the good old man" (sc. I, 12) has stirred up among "the people" (*Clar.*)

9. *Greenly*, like persons green (i. e. immature) in judgement, as Sh.'s Cleopatra will say she once was (*Ant. and Cleo.* I, v, 74).—*In hugger-mugger*, with secret, and more or less confused, haste; a phrase not vulgar then.

10. *Divided from herself*; cp. V, II, 218.—*Fair*, clear, right.

11. *The which*, more emphatic than "which;" cp. 9 n. 1.—*We are*, printed "we're" by Pope; cp. sc. VII, 11 n.

12. *As much containing*: having as much in it, "importing" as much.

13. *Feeds on his wonder*: ruminates his doubts and guesses.—*In clouds*: mysteriously aloof.

And wants[1] not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity[2], of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign[3]
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece[4], in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [*A noise within.*
Queen. Alack, what noise is this?
King. Where are my Switzers[5]? Let them guard the door.

Enter another Gentleman[6].

What is the matter?
Gent. Save yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list[7],
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste[8]
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head[9],
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;

1. *Wants*, lacks.

2. *Wherein*, in which matter, (more naturally perhaps, and more weightily, than "in which speeches)." —*Necessity*, "the obligation of an accuser to support his charge" (Johnson); more exactly, perhaps, the necessity of accusing some one of a death in such suspicious circumstances; *if not*, rather, necessity in the sense of *figurative necessitousness*, indigence of knowledge, lack of substantial "matter" (cp. 164), as explained by the parenthetic phrase that follows (*V.*).

3. *Nothing* : not at all.—*Stick to arraign* : stick at arraigning, hesitate to arraign.

4. *Murdering-piece*, or "murderer." "*Meurtrière*, c'est une petite canonnière comme celles des tours et murailles, ainsi appelée parce que, tirant par icelle a desceu (= Mod. Fr. "à l'insu" i. e., here, under concealment), ceux ausquels on tire sont facilement meurtris" (Nicot, *Thresor de la langue francoyse*, 1606). Being loaded with case-shot (Fr. *mitraille*), it would "give death in many places."

5. *Switzers* = Swiss guards.

6. "*A Messenger*" (Q² and F), "*Nuntius*" in Latin tragedies.

7. *Overpeering*, appearing above and overflowing.—*Of*, II, 1, 91 n. —*List* = limit.

8. *Eats... with... haste*, devours.

9. *Head* is used by Sh. repeatedly of an armed force; and "riotous head" here has been accordingly taken to mean band of rioters. Riotously "hostile advance," preferred by Mr. Onions, besides going, perhaps, a little better with *in*, has the support of the still current phrase "to make head against." Cp.

And, as[1] the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known[2],
The ratifiers and props of every word[3],
They cry 'Choose we[4]. Laertes shall be king!'
Caps[5], hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds :
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry[6]!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs[7]!

King. The doors are broke[8]. [*Noise within.*

Enter LAERTES, *armed*; Danes *following.*

Laer.[9] Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will. [*They retire without the door.*

Laer. I thank you : keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

also, in connection with 91-2, the use of "head" for a high tidal wave (mostly in an estuary).

1. *As*, II, I, 90; we still say "as it were."

2. *Antiquity*, ancient usage.—*Forgot*, p. 124 n. 8.—*Custom*, which, to whatever degree the crown may have been elective (cp. I, II, 109), could not give "*the rabble*" the right to change their kings as they pleased.

3. *Word*, such as "king" in the next line.

4. *Choose we*, I, I, 33; but here the pronoun is stressed.

5. *Caps*, normal epithets to which, in such cases, are "sweaty" (*J. Caesar*, I, II, 245), "stinking, greasy" (*Coriolanus*, IV, VI, 131).

6. *Cry*, give tongue, like hounds striking a "*trail.*"

7. *Counter*, "when a hound hunteth backwards, the same way that the chase is come" (old definition quoted by *Clar.*). Cp. the French phrase "*suivre le contre-pied*, suivre les traces (de la bête) à rebours."—*False*, crying on the false trail, false to their rightful king.—*Dogs*, contemptuous; cp. *rabble*, 92, and V, II, 283.

8. *Broke*, not exceptional then, or even later, for "broken"; cp. e. g. n. 2 and p. 63 n. 10.

9. *Laertes*, whose speeches, in this scene, will be sonorous (not insincere) specimens of passionate Elizabethan rhetoric. 110-2 e. g. develop imaginatively 109 (which itself recalls part of a speech of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, II, I, 136-

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot[1]
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows[2]
Of my true[3] mother.
King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy[4] rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person[5]:
There's such divinity doth hedge a king[6],
That treason can but peep to what it would[7],
Acts little of his will[8]. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.
Laer. Where is my father?
King. Dead.
Queen. But not by him.

138). Hamlet, through the greater part of sc. IV of the preceding Act, had addressed his mother in a style somewhat similar, though far more substantial and soul-stirring.

1. *Brands*; cp. III, IV, 44.

2. *Even here* (pointing to his own forehead; cp. p. 187 n. 1.—*Brows*, strictly the prominences above the eyes.

3. *True*, as in "true-love."

4. *Thy*, familiar and superior.

5. *Let him go.* After he had exclaimed "*Give me my father!*", according to Johnson (preferably, it seems, at some menacing movement of his, after the king's coolly ironical demand), Gertrude had thrown herself between the two men; and she is clinging to Laertes to prevent him from striking.—*Fear*, I, III, 51. Claudius here is at his highest, a king indeed by right of fearlessness.

6. *Divinity.* Cp. one of Belleforest's additions, in Amleth's speech to his mother: "*les Roys sacrez, et qui sont les amis et compagnons des Dieux, et ceux qui représentent leur majesté, et image.*"—*Hedge*, enclose so as to defend, as if with a hedge (which is a kind of fence i. e. defence, cp. IV, VII, 96).

7. *Treason*, high treason.—*Peep.* Chettle, in his *Englandes Mourning Garment* (1603), told how, Elizabeth being on the river, near Greenwich, a shot, fired by accident, struck the royal barge and hurt a man near her. "The French ambassador being amazed, and all crying Treason, Treason! yet she... bad them never fear, for, if the shot were made at her, they durst not shoot again: such majesty had her presence, and such boldness her heart, that she despised all fear, and was, as all princes are or should be, so full of divine fullness that guilty mortality durst not behold her but with dazzled eyes."—*To*: cp. notes to I, II, 37, II, II, 459, and such phrases as "with an eye. a view, *to.*"—*It would* do.

8. *Acts little of his will.* Claudius,

King. Let him demand his fill.
Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit[1]!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand[2],
That both the worlds I give to negligence[3],
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most throughly[4] for my father.
King. Who shall stay[5] you?
Laer. My will, not all the world[6]:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.
King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death[7], is it writ[8] in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?[9]
Laer. None but his enemies.
King. Will you know them then?
Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
And like the kind life-rendering pelican,

who had acted *all* his will on his king and brother, is bluffing. But the theme would not be the less welcome to royal patrons of the stage, conscious of reasons for actually going in fear of their lives. Cp. presently (123-6) Laertes' denunciation of himself; also Brutus on "conspiracy" (*J. Caesar*, II, I, 77-85).—*His* (after *it*): p. 5 n. 7.

1. *Grace*, "a disposition to yield obedience to the divine laws" (Caldecott) i. e. "conscience" in its religious aspect; cp. *divinity*, 113, and note on I, I, 131.—*Pit* of *hell*.

2. *To... I stand* = I stand (i. e. abide) by, persist in.

3. I carelessly disregard both this world and the next.

4. *Throughly* (still used, even in prose, a century later) = thoroughly.

5. *Shall stay* = is going to restrain.

6. *World* (F.). Q^2 has "worlds," more windy, if a plural (cp. however 126); rather too exactly antithetic, perhaps, if, as Pope thought, a possessive case (of the apostrophe marking a genitive, Q^3 knows nothing anywhere; cp. p. 95 n. 5).

7. *Certainty of* = certain truth about.

8. *Writ*, I, II, 222.

9. *Swoopstake* (an alteration of "sweepstake" under the influence of "swoop," and apparently adverbial here), like one who, at some

Repast them with my blood[1].
King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly[2] in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement pierce[3]
As day does to your eye.
Danes. [*Within*] Let her come in.
Laer. How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter OPHELIA[4].

O heat[5], dry up my brains! tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye[6]!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight[7],
Till our scale turn[8] the beam. O rose of May[9]!

game of cards, should *swoop* down upon the *stakes*, whether *loser's or winner's*, to "*draw*," i. e. *sweep up*, the whole indiscriminately. Q^2 and F give *soopstake*.

1. *Thus wide.* Laertes is of a distinctly spectacular disposition (cp. 206 and sc. VII, 28); cp. however p. 59 n. 2, bearing in mind also the probable vivacity of expressiveness of Elizabethan acting.—*Ope*, p. 48, n. 8.—*Life-rendering* = that surrenders, gives up, its life-blood to its young, to others.

2. *Sensibly* = feelingly.

3. *It*, slightly emphatic.—*Level... pierce* recalls IV, I, 42, from the same lips.

4. *Re-enter Ophelia*, "fantastically" decked with straws and flowers, according to Rowe, who may have merely recorded what was then already the practice of the stage, or argued for himself from what follows, from sc. VII, 168-169, and perhaps from the fact that Lear, in his madness, is met (IV, IV, 2-6) singing also, and "*crown'd with*

all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn."

The only indication we possess, earlier than Rowe's, is that of Q^1, which gives merely "*as before*;" see p. 179 n. 1. Presently it will make Ophelia explain that she has been "*gathering of flowers*;" but cp. p. 189 n. 4.

5. *Heat* of passion (176).

6. *Burn*, p. 129 n. 13.—*Virtue*, natural power.

7. *With weight* = with full (i. e. fully equal) weight. F. has *by*.

8. *Turn*, incline (subjunctive; with more *passion* in its indefiniteness than F.'s *turns*).

9. Cp. I, III, 41.

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is it possible[1], a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine[2],
It sends some precious instance[3] of itself
After the thing it loves[4].

Oph. [*Sings*]
They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny[5];
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,—
Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. [*Sings*[6]] You must sing a-down a-down,
And you call him a-down-a[7].

1. *Is it possible.* Obviously all this is to be taken as uttered under the first shock of finding her mad. In the theatre, or while under the spell of such passages, who remembers 81-2 with sufficient coolness to wonder how this can be the first meeting between brother and sister, how no "buzzer," it seems, had even *told* Laertes of Ophelia's condition? Cp. p. 177 n. 1; also e. g. n. 3 p. 215.

2. *Fine*, refined.—*Where*, in the case of people in whom.

3. *Instance* seems to mean here sample (etymologically = example). The "instance," in Ophelia's case, is her "*fair judgement*," (77) which has followed the father she loved to the grave.

4. In these three lines (unknown to the quartos) Johnson saw an allusion to that law of physics by which parts of *refined* substances easily obey attraction.

5. Not in the quartos.—A song in *Much Ado About Nothing* (II, III) closes with :

And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Nor can the burden of the lovers, spring "carol" in *As you Like It*, V, III ("*With a hey, and a-ho, and a hey nonino*") be other than "blithe" also. Schmidt, in consequence, takes 157 as a sign of Ophelia's disordered state of mind. But such combinations of syllables, meaningless in themselves, afford scope for great variety of suggestion; and even a kind of lullaby would seem to be among the possibilities here.

6. *Sings.* So, at least, various editors have thought, though F, at least, prints both lines as prose. —*A-down a-down* belongs to a less indefinite order of refrains than 157 and is obviously associated, in Ophelia's mind, with the lowering of the body *adown* the grave.

7. *And*, apparently as in I, v, 176.

O, how the wheel becomes it[1]! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter[2]. 165

Laer. This nothing's more than matter[3].

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance[4]; pray, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's for thoughts[5].

Laer. A document[6] in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted. 171

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines[7] :

1. *How the wheel becomes it!* what a fitting accompaniment to it is the sound of the spinning-wheel! A passage of *Twelfth Night* (II, IV,4 3-46), where a song, " old and plain, " is described as " chanted " by " spinsters " at their work, supports this now generally received interpretation.

2. Q[1] calls the *master* King. One stage interpretation makes Ophelia move towards Claudius after " *becomes it* " and suddenly start back in horror, identifying him with the " *false steward.* " *He* had " *stolen* " his royal brother's wife; cp. n. 7.

3. *Nothing*, l. 7.—*Matter*, 82; cp. II, II, 95.

4. *There's.* Whether the flowers she is going to distribute are real (as usually, probably long since, on the stage; cp. p. 187, n. 4), or imaginary, she is guided in the choice of each by the " fitness " (171) between the symbolical value popularly attached to it and the character of the person to whom she gives it. At the sound of Laertes' voice, she may have turned towards him, conscious of a loving presence, which she confuses perhaps (cp. next line; but keep in mind also l. 63) with that of the Hamlet of bygone days.—*For remembrance*, possibly because it is one of the scented plants that " keep seeming (= outward appearance) and savour, all the winter long " (*Winter's Tale*, IV, III, 75). It figured traditionally both at weddings and at burials; which is to the point, here (cp. Coleridge, p. 179 n. 7).

5. *Pansies* are, etymologically, for " thoughts; " and the latter word is, by Sh. and others, often used of love-thoughts, frequently of melancholy thoughts, as no doubt here. Cp. " thought " in 179 (and III, I, 85, IV, 51).

6. *Document* = teaching. This, the literal sense of the Latin " *documentum*, " is the only one explicitly recorded, in French, by the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*, in 1694, and still occurs, in the following century, both in France and in England.

7. *Fennel*, perhaps because of its pleasing scent, was associated with flattery; and *columbines* were among the emblems of deceived husbands. To Claudius, who could " smile and smile " (I, v, 108), and had " won to his shameful lust the will of (his brother's) most seeming-virtuous queen " (*ibid.* 45-46), commentators have generally assigned, in consequence, the fennel and columbines.—That Ophelia, in her abnormal state, should read characters, and half-divine stories, of which she had shown little or no perception when she had her reason, would not surprise an Elizabethan audience.

there's rue[1] for you; and here's some for me : we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays[2] : O, you must wear your rue with a difference[3]. There's a daisy[4] : I would give you some violets[5], but they withered all when my father[6] died : they say he made a good end[7],—

[*Sings*[8]] For bonny[9] sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion[10], hell itself,
She turns to favour[11] and to prettiness. 180

Oph. [*Sings*] And will a[12] not come again?
And will a not come again?
No, no, he is dead :
Go to thy death-bed :

1. *Rue* has a very bitter taste (the Gardener in *Richard II*, III, IV, 105, calls it "sour herb of grace"). This, apparently, had led to the identification of its name with the verb of the same form, meaning to remember sorrowfully, to repent (distinctively, Gertrude's case), to regret (distinctively, cp. 175, Ophelia's).

2. *Grace* (cp. I, I, 131 n.). In Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592), advantage is taken in the same way of the two names of the herb. Cp. note on "daisy," 175.—*O*', first substituted by Theobald for the *a* of the three original editions. Cp. Introd. p. XXI n. 8.

3. *Difference.* Ophelia here uses a heraldic phrase applied, in strictness, to some mark *distinguishing* the coat of arms of the junior member of a family, for example, from that of his senior.

4. *A daisy.* In Greene's *Quip*, the presence of "the dissembling daisy" is a warning "not to trust every fair promise that amorous bachelors make." "Does she mean the daisy for herself?" has been asked, in consequence. Probably for Claudius or Gertrude (*Clar.*); for Gertrude rather, once more (*V.*).

5. *Violets* : are "for faithfulness," according to one of the poems in *A Handful of Pleasant Delites* (1584); if so, *you*, emphasized, applies, no doubt, to Horatio.

6. *My father*, who was "*faithful*" too; cp. II, II, 131.

7. *Made a good end*, and so must be in Heaven (cp. 207). Some such thought, at least, may perhaps have led to the momentary outbreak of "joy" (though earthly joy), in song soon to pass into fresh strains of mourning.

8. *Sings* a line of a then well-known ballad, beginning with "*My Robin is to the greenwood gone*," and the hero of which may have been the legendary outlaw Robin Hood; if so, the singer is his mistress, Maid Marian.

9. *Bonny*, pleasant to look on; a homely word, telling of simple pleasure, and breezier than "sweet."

10. *Thought*, 169.—*Passion* = violent sorrow; cp. II, II, 516.

11. *Favour* = charm (for it gains favour), a sense not special to Sh.

12. *A* (Qq.) = he. This vulgarism (unknown to the F text of *this* play; contrast n. 2), sporadic in Q^2, had occurred already in 177.

He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll[1] :
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away[2] moan :
God a mercy[3] on his soul!
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you[4].
[*Exit.*

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune[5] with your grief,
Or you deny me right[6]. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends[7] you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :
If by direct or by collateral hand[8]
They find us touch'd[9], we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience[10] to us,
And we shall jointly[11] labour with your soul
To give it due content.[12]

Laer. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral[13],

1. *Poll*, in its original sense of head (especially part of the head on which the hair grows), already belonged to the more homely vocabulary. Cp. *pate*, II, II, 571.

2. *Cast away*, waste, as one says "to throw money away."

3. *A* (*Q*[2]) = have; F. has *Gramercy* (God grant mercy).

4. *Of* = on. Many epitaphs concluded with the general prayer in 191.—*Be wi'*, p. 64 n. 8.

5. *Commune* (accented, here, on the first, as sometimes still in Tennyson, for example), confer sympathetically ("to share, participate in", is among the obsolete senses recorded in *N. E. D.*).

6. *Right*, something rightly due.

7. *Your wisest friends*, parenthetic and explanatory : as being your wisest friends.

8. By (directly or indirectly) having had a hand in your father's death.

9. *Touch'd* with guilt. For "touch," probably in the sense of infect, cp. sc. VII, 145-146.

10. *Lend your patience*, as one says "to lend one's ear."

11. *Jointly*, more emphatic, placed thus, than after the verb.

12. *Content*, so soon after l. 198 betrays haste.

13. *His means of death* : the means of his death; cp. I, IV, 73 and p. 137

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment[1] o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation[2],
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,[3]
That [4]I must call it in question.
King. So you shall;
And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me.[5] [*Exeunt.*

Scene VI. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter Horatio *and a* Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?
Serv. Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.
Hor. Let them come in. [*Exit Servant.*
I do not know from what part of the world[6]
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

First Sail. God bless you, sir.
Hor. Let him bless thee too.

n. 4.—*Obscure*; p. 45 n. 11.

1. *Trophy*, in the sense of emblem in honour of the dead (cp. IV, vii, 175).—*Sword.* Cp. "When a man of good family was buried in a church, it was usual to hang his casque, sword, and coat armour, in its tinctures, over his tomb, special funeral armour being often made for the purpose" (*Sh.'s England*, vol. II, p. 150).—*Hatchment*, tablet (square or diamond-shaped), displaying the deceased person's armorial bearings (symbolical of some *achievement*; whence the name, however mutilated and disfigured).

2. *Formal*, in due form.—*Ostentation*, "noble" display, pomp, without any idea of blame (which the word implies only once out of the half dozen cases in which Sh. uses it).

3. Reverses *Genesis*; p. 143 n. 8.

4. *That*=so that, as often in Sh.

5. *Go*, leave this place.—A metrical line of the shorter group-exit type; cp. close of I, v, IV, vii, V, ii.

6. The line (like 6) differs *extremely* little from perfectly current prose. The traditional typographical disposition (from Q^2 and F

First Sail. He shall, sir, and it[1] please him. There's a letter for you, sir : it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know[2] it is.

Hor. [*Reads*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked[3] this, give these fellows some means to[4] the king : they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment[5] gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them : on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy[6] : but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore[7] of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England : of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;
And do it the speedier, that[8] you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt*[9].

uniformly downwards) seems to signify mainly the deliberate utterance, in soliloquy, of wondering reflection. More decided will be the rhythm of 21-3.

1. *Shall*, to be sure; don't trouble. —*And it*, cp. p. 161 n. 7.

2. *Let to know*, a phrase in which "let" (cp. German *lassen*) = caused, made.

3. *Overlooked* = looked over (i. e. through), perused.

4. *To* = of access to.

5. *Appointment*, equipment.

6. *Thieves of mercy*, II, 1, 63 n.

7. *Bore* : calibre (of a gun).

8. *That*, p. 192, n. 4.

9. *Exeunt*, after a scene to which justice has not always been done. Even its "sea-faring man," however briefly sketched and on merely typical lines, makes, for the moment, a breezy change. As to the news, why not accept them in the spirit that Sh. would expect from his audience : appreciation of their exciting nature, of the intricate opportuneness of the affair with

Scene VII. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter King *and* Laertes.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance[1] seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear[2],
That he which[3] hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears: but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats[4],
So crimeful[5] and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom[6], all things else,
You mainly[7] were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinew'd[8],
But yet to me they are[9] strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which[10]—

the "*thieves of mercy,*" of the hero's valiancy and resourcefulness, of his epistolary style too, as sharp as any rapier (cp. sc. VII, 43-52)?

1. *Acquittance* = acquittal.

2. *Sith*, II, II, 6.—*Knowing* the true from the false.

3. *Which*, first replaced by "who" in the quarto of 1676, conformably to modern usage.

4. *Feat*, here = signally *evil* deed; cp. "this terrible *feat*," Duncan's murder (*Macbeth*, I, VII, 80).

5. *Crimeful*. Between the two instances in Sh. (the other occurs in *Lucrece*, 970, "this cursed crimeful night") and Tennyson's use of the word in his *Harold*, V, I, *N. E. D.* has no example.

6. *Wisdom* adds nothing to the argument implied in "*safety*." Q^2 makes the line a flagging Alexandrine by inserting between the two "*greatness*;" which may have been a manuscript alternative for either and (particularly in connection with III, III, 5-23) might, in fact, be preferred.

7. *Mainly* = powerfully.

8. *Much unsinew'd*: greatly wanting in sinews (i. e. force; cp. I, V, 94 and II, II, 472), very feeble.

9. *They are* (F; Q^2 prints *thar*); cp. p. 182 n. 2.

10. *My virtue or my plague*, a virtue in me or a plague to me.—*Be... which*: whether it should be

She's so conjunctive[1] to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere[2],
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go[3],
Is the great love the general gender[4] bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone[5],
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows[6],
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again[7],
And not[8] where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have[9] I a noble father lost:
A sister driven into desperate terms,[10]
Whose worth, if praises may go back again[11],

regarded as the one or as the other. "Either" means "one or the other;" and "which" (interrogatively, still expressive of doubt as to choice) apparently re-emphasizes the alternative, so that "*either which*" = whichsoever of the two.

1. *Conjunctive* (which F. has also in *Othello*, I, III, 374), a perhaps still more emphatic synonym of "conjunct" (twice in *Lear*), as if conjoined by natural affinity.

2. *His* (I, I, 37) *sphere*; to whose motion that of "*the star*" was, in ancient astronomy, supposed to be due.

3. *Count*, in the sense of declaration of charges in a trial, rather than in that of "account, reckoning," simply.—*Might not*, was not at liberty to.

4. *The general gender*. For "*general*," cp. p. 93 n. 6; "*gender*" = kind, sort. The phrase itself (= the common sort) is apparently Shakespearean.

5. Not necessarily an allusion to *foreign* wonders. Besides the "dropping well" at Knaresborough (Yorkshire), for instance, which modern tourists visit still, another, "not far from stony Stratford, converteth many things into stone" (Harrison, *Description of England*, pub. 1578).

6. *Gyves*, II, I, 79.—*Graces*, ornaments betokening most lovable (almost heaven-sent) virtues, instead of being disgraceful punishment for guilt. Schmidt's second definition of "grace" is "any excellence which conciliates love and makes well-pleasing;" cp. also I, II, 63 n.—*Arrows* would apparently have played a part in Devonshire (and, no doubt, other counties), if troops had been landed there by the Armada. But it would have been for the last time in English warfare (art. on *Archery* in *Encycl. Brit.*).

7. For the imaginative exaggeration and a certain general turgidity, cp. note on I, II, 7.

8. *Not* hit.

9. *Have*; cp. IV, IV, 56. "Find" would be the nearest modern equivalent.

10. *Terms*, p. 10 n. 2.

11. *Back again* (emphatic phrasing) to what she no longer is.

Stood challenger on mount of all the age[1]
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.
King. Break not your sleeps for that : you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with[2] danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
I lov'd your father, and we love ourself[3];
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger.

How now! what news?
Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet[4]:
These to your majesty; this[5] to the queen.
King. From Hamlet! who brought them?
Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not :
They were given me by Claudio[7]; he receiv'd them
Of[6] him that brought them.
King. Laertes, you shall[8] hear them.
Leave us. [*Exit Messenger.*
[*Reads*] ' High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked[9] on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave

1. *On mount* must mean " as if on a height " and thus well in view.—*Of all the age*, governed by *challenger*. As regards the quality of the whole image, cp. p. 187 n. 1.

2. *Shook* (cp. e. g. " *o'ertook*, " II, i, 58), the most frequent form in Sh.—*With* = by.

3. *Ourself*, regal; which, among other implications, more than justifies the *love*, III, iii, 8-23.

4. *Hamlet*. Contrast e. g. Polonius's " *the Lord* Hamlet, " II, ii, 220. Sh., like his *messenger* (no doubt, " another Gentleman, " cp. p. 183 n. 6), makes speed.

5. *This* not so formally solemn as *these*; cp. p. 171 n. 5.

6. *Claudio*, which is just, in Italian garb (cp. note 8 to *Dramatis Personae*), the name already given to the king himself in the stage-direction of I, ii; but this name, the audience never hears.

7. *Of*; cp. p. 85 n. 7.

8. Cp. e. g. l. 43 *you shall know*, i. e. I will let (p. 193 n. 2) you know. —As regards the business-like freedom of rhythm in 40-1, cp. n. 4.

9. *Naked* (like Lat. " *nudus*, ") : destitute, helpless, " High and Mighty! " (contrast also " *your* Kingdom ").

to see your kingly eyes[1]: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto[2], recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return[3]. HAMLET.'

What should[5] this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse[6], and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character[7]. 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'
Can you advise me?

Laer. I'm lost in it[8], my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,[9]
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'

King. If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so? how otherwise[10]?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So[11] you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
As checking[12] at his voyage, and that[13] he means

1. *Your kingly eyes*; cp. IV, IV, 6.

2. *Thereunto*,: with regard to that, namely my sudden return.

3. *Recount* (another touch of ironical solemnity), give a detailed account of.—*Occasion*, chance cause; F has the plural, meaning occurrences.

4. *More strange* even than it is sudden.

5. *Should*, p: 68 n. 5: cp. 58.

6. *Abuse* (as frequently then) = imposture.

7. *Character*, then current in the sense of handwriting.

8. *I'm lost in it*; Fr. *je m'y perds*.

9. It warms my heart, even in its sickness, however sick (i. e. oppressed, not with apprehensive faintness as in I, I, 9, but with grief) it feels.

10. *As* (cp. p. 170 n. 9). The first argumentative question gives the reason for having said *if*; the second, the reason for taking the possibility *definitely* into account.

11. *So* = if it be so that, on condition that.

12. *Checking at*, stopping short and refusing to go on with (*O.*); or, perhaps, even much like (as we might say now) shying at (if there should be some *confused* influence of the language of falconry). As Sh. knew quite well (e. g. *Twelfth Night*, III, I, 71-72), a hawk was said to *check*, when she swerved from the pursuit of her proper quarry to *fly at* worthless birds that chanced to cross her path.

13. *That*, used (like Fr. *que*, in such constructions) the more easily

No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit now ripe in my device[1],
Under the which[2] he shall not choose but fall :
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe[3],
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice[4]
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ[5].

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine : your sum of parts[6]
Did not together pluck[7] such envy from him
As did that one, and that in my regard
Of the unworthiest siege[8].

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very[9] riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth[10] no less becomes
The light and careless livery[11] that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds[12],

then because of the possibility of *if that* e. g. IV, iv, 5.

1. *In my device* : as I have planned it.

2. *The which* (slightly emphatic; cp. I, i, 90), unlike that which has just failed.

3. *Breathe*, however softly. Cp. II, i, 31.

4. *Uncharge*, a rather heavy (and thus Claudius-like) negative, prompted by uneasy consciousness of guilt, since it means "acquit of any charge. "—*Practice*, often = stratagem; cp. p. 70 n. 1.

5. *Organ* = instrument, means.

6. *Your sum of parts* = the whole of your talents, all your talents *together*.

7. *Pluck*, draw with force.

8. *Siege*, = rank (according to which people should be *seated*); supposed to imply worth, whence *unworthiest* i. e. of least worth.

9. *Very* (Fr. *vrai*), mere.

10. *Youth*, made the subject of "becomes, " because it is the dominant of the whole sentence.

11. *Livery*. Cp. Charles d'Orléans' use of the word, e. g. in a *Chanson* :

Esté revest champs, bois, et fleurs
De sa livrée de verdure
Et de maintes autres couleurs.

12. *Sables*, "the rich furs... which we call sables " (quotation of 1553, in *N. E. D.*); cp. p. 124 n. 4.—*Weeds*, a word more impressive than "garments, " though by no means rare with Sh. and his contemporaries.

Importing health[1] and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy :—
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback[2] : but this gallant[3]
Had witchcraft in it; he grew unto[4] his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been incorps'd and demi-natur'd[5]
With the brave beast : so far he topp'd[6] my thought
That I, in forgery of shapes[7] and tricks,
Came short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was it?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond[8].

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well : he is the brooch[9] indeed
And gem of all the nation.

1. *Importing* (nearer here to the sense in III, II, 125 than in I, II, 23) : implying, signifying.—*Health.* "Shakespeare wrote *wealth*" (Warburton; cp. Appendix *B.*); and it has been proposed, at least, to understand "health" as = welfare in general, prosperity (cp. e. g. I, III, 21). Nothing in the context, however, points to this sense; and care (contrast *careless*, 79) for health, attention to health (and to a garb expressive of *graveness*), Malone's interpretation (1790), seems preferable.

2. *Seen and served*, equivalent to the modern phrase "seen service" (*O.*)—*Can* do.

3. *Gallant* = fine gentleman, as in French.

4. *Grew unto* (for the accent cp. 181 and II, II, 148 n.) = adhered, as if by natural growth, to.

5. *Incorps'd and demi-natur'd*, rare Latin phrasing (*N. E. D.* gives no instances that are not really quotations of the present passage), which harmonizes with the demi-evocation of the Centaurs of classical mythology.

6. *Topp'd*, surpassed.

7. *Forgery*, invention.—*Shapes*, attitudes in horsemanship; the word was used of dancing also.

8. *Lamond* is Pope's attenuation of F.'s "*Lamound*" (possibly for *Lamount*, a name that would sound not ill-suited to a rider). Q^2 has "*Lamord*," in which Dowden was tempted to recognise "Lemords" = "*Lemors.*"—That some contemporary French harseman was alluded to, perhaps by his real name, has also been imagined; in which case, the passage would illustrate the "*revue*" element in Elizabethan plays (cp. p. 86 n. 2). But, besides the intrinsic attractiveness of such bravura, on the part of both horseman and poet, might it not be sufficiently accounted for by the tactics of Claudius?

9. *Brooch* (of which the verb "broach" is another form, indicating the usual pronunciation more clearly); Fr. *broche*, then often worn

King. He made confession of you[1],
And gave you such a masterly report[2]
For art and exercise in your defence[3],
And for your rapier most especial[4],
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed
If one could match you : the scrimers of their nation[5],
He swore, had neither motion[6], guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his[7] envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play[8] with him.
Now, out of this—
Laer. What out of this, my lord?
King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?
Laer. Why ask you this?
King. Not that I think you did not love your father;
But that I know love is begun by time[9],

by men in the *cap* (cp. 77) or hat, conspicuously.

1. *You*, i. e. your superiority.

2. Bestowed on you a report that represented you as so masterly.

3. *Exercise* = practice.—*Defence* = skill in self-defence, i. e. in "*the Noble Science of Defence*" as fencing was impressively termed.

4. *Rapier*, the long, sharp variety of sword that, introduced in England towards the middle of the XVIth century had become, before it was over, preeminently a gentleman's weapon.—*Especial* (Q^4) = "especially" F (which thus avoided making the adjective rather archaically quadrisyllabic); p. 40 n. 3.

5. *Scrimer* (*scrimure* in Q^2, our only authority from *the* to *them*), a rare word, says *N. E. D.* (which has the French "*escrymeurs*," in full, in one XVIth century text).—*Their* has, over the more strictly logical "his.", the advantage of definitely setting Lamond and the French on one side, Claudius and the Danes on the other with Laertes, and of thus sympathetically stirring the national fibre in him.

6. *Motion* (of which *N. E. D.* has an instance from a treatise on fencing two hundred years later), skilled movement; here, skilled *attack*.

7. *His* emphasizes such envy as a personal trait.

8. *Play*, used of fencing even now.

9. *Is begun by time* seems to mean "has its beginning from causes *that depend on* time" (and so varies in degree with time, l. 112-114).

And that I see, in passages of proof[1],
Time qualifies the spark and fire[2] of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it[3];
And nothing is at a like goodness still[4],
For goodness, growing to a plurisy[5],
Dies in[6] his own too much : that[7] we would do
We should do when we would; for this ' would ' changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents[8];
And then this ' should ' is like a spendthrift[9] sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick of the ulcer :
Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

1. *Passages* = things that come to pass, occurrences.—*Of proof* may mean : that are matter of experience (cp. III, II, 1) or, more pointedly, that afford proof of what I say.

2. *Fire*, then " often spelt and still vulgarly pronounced *fier* ", disyllabically (Abbott); cp. *fiery*.—F. cuts out (cp. e. g. p. 200 n. 5). the next ten lines. Such eloquently prolonged moralising, however (on a significant theme, which was also that of the Player King's longest speech, III, II, 175 ff.), besides being quite in the style of Claudius (cp. e. g. I, II, 89-106), has obvious tactical value (cp. p. 199 n. 8).

3. *Snuff*, that part of the wick which, never being quite consumed, has to be removed at intervals.

4. *And*, indeed.—*At a like* : at one and the same degree of.—*Still*, II, II, 42.—Both as regards matter and manner, the line might have been spoken by the King in the Play of III, II. Cp. n. 2.—*Will*, p. 32 n. 4.

5. *Plurisy*, in the figurative sense of superabundance, not uncommon then, and explained by the prevalence of this mode of spelling (still found a century after Sh.), which suggested derivation from Lat. *plus* and gave rise to an impression that pleurisy was due to excess of humours.

6. *In* (cp. p. 178 n. 12) equivalent here to " of " after *die*.

7. *That*, I, II, 17.

8. *Tongues* to criticize it; *hands* to oppose it; *accidents* to cross it.

9. *Spendthrift*, an epithet (which the quarto of 1676 was the first to substitute for the earlier possessive form) explained by the belief that *sighs* " cost the blood dear " (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, II, 97), sucked up and " consumed " it (*2d Part of Henry VI*, III, II, 61-3).—Thus much homage to the conscience *eases* it temporarily but *hurts*, (i. e. does harm), by wasting in wind what moral energy the man may have to spend.

Laer. To cut his throat in the church.

King. No place indeed should murder sanctuarize[1];
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall[2] know you are come home :
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence[3]
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together,
And wager on your heads : he, being remiss[4],
Most generous and free from all contriving[5],
Will not peruse the foils[6]; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may[7] choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice[8]
Requite him for your father.

Laer[9]. I will do it :
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank[10],
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples[11] that have virtue

1. *Sanctuarize* (not special to Sh.) i. e. shelter from punishment, as within the *bounds* of a sacred place.

2. *Shall*, p. 196 n. 8.

3. *We*, as in 31 ff.—*Put on* : set on, set to work.—*Those* that.

4. *Remiss*, not given to examining things with (suspicious) strictness.

5. *Free*, p. 100 n. 11.—*Contriving*, here : machination; cp. *practice* n. 8.—Ingenuously self-condemning praise by a villain of his intended victim was one (cp. p. 107 n. 8) of the simplicities of Elizabethan stage technique. Here e. g. it made the coming catastrophe "most" sympathetically intelligible.

6. *Peruse*, II, 1, 89.—*Foils*, cp. p. 85 n. 8.

7. *May*; cp. l. 17.

8. *Unbated*. To "*bate*" a sword (or "*abate*" or "*rebate*;" cp. *épée rabattue*, in Littré) was to blunt it, as the point of a foil e. g. is blunted by the button.—*Practice*, a word of (here) sinister ambiguity; cp. 68.

9. *Laertes*, true to the spirit not only of his former answer, and of IV, v, 146-147, but of a Renaissance tragedy of revenge in general.

10. *Unction*, III, IV, 145.—*Mountebank*, itinerant quack; French *saltimbanques* sold drugs also.

11. *Collected*, III, II, 242.—*Simples*, plants each of which sufficed for a "simple" remedy.

Under the moon[1], can save the thing[2] from death
That is but scratch'd withal[3] : I'll touch my point
With this contagion[4], that[5], if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape[6] : if this should fail,
And that[7] our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
Should have a back or second[8], that might hold
If this did blast in proof[9]. Soft! let me see :
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings :
I have it[10] :
When in your motion[11] you are hot and dry—
As[12] make your bouts more violent to that end—
And that[13] he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him

1. *Under the moon*, whose light, shining on them when they were gathered, had intensified their medicinal "virtues," just as the midnight hour had done for the dire "natural magic" of the weeds in the "mixture rank" of Lucianus (III, II, 242-243 again).

2. *Can* = that it can.—*Thing*, living thing.

3. *Withal* : therewith, with it.

4. *Touch*, IV, v, 198 n.—*Contagion*, poison that infects by contact: cp. *unction* above.

5. *That*, IV, v, 208.

6. *Shape* : sometimes meant "a part in a play, a character impersonated" (*N. E. D.*)—as well as the make-up and the dress (still one of the technical senses, p. 45 n. 3) for the part. Johnson interpreted : "may enable us to assume proper characters and to act our part." Cp. however also, III, I, 127.

7. *That*, 61.

8. *A back or second* : another to back, or second, it. All this doubling and redoubling of "foul practice" (with intricately fatal consequences) would be highly welcome to Elizabethan audiences; and Sh., as a practical playwright, may have contented himself with giving an air of serpent-like cunning —fold upon fold, as it were— to a heaping on of villainies found effective in the old play.

9. *Blast*, explode.—*In proof* (which has very much the look of a technical phrase; cp. I, II, 128 n.) — when put to the proof, tested.

10. *Have it*, clipped down to *ha't* in F. (*hate* in Q^2); p. 99 n. 5.

11. *Motion*, as in 101, but more general.

12. *As*; cp. p. 170 n. 9.

13. *That*; "when that", not uncommon at the time, will occur in V, I, 288; cp. p. 197 n. 13.

A chalice for the nonce[1], whereon[2] but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck[3],
Our purpose may hold[4] there. But stay, what noise?

Enter QUEEN.

How now, sweet queen!

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow[5] grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves[6] in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come[7]
Of crow-flowers[8], nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal[9] shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers[10] call them :

1. *Chalice*, a finer synonym of "cup."—*For the nonce* (originally "for *the once*" = for once), for the occasion.

2. *Whereon*, if not simply = *whereof*, of which (cp. e. g. "out on't," V, I, 123, spoken, it is true, by a clown), may suggest mere contact. Cp. p. 107 n. 2.

3. *Stuck*, which looks like a variant of "*stock*" (Fr. *estoc*), is apparently equivalent here to the "*stoccado*" of *Merry Wives*, II, I, 234 (in Fr. *estocade*).

4. *Hold*, 153.

5. *Willow*, the tree of unrequited, or forsaken, love.

6. *His*, I, I, 37.—*Hoar*, silvery grey on the side that the *glassy stream* mirrors.

7. *There with*, one word in Q^1, which finishes the line with "*make*" instead of "come." Willow garlands, worn symbolically, are mentioned e. g. in the burden of Desdemona's song, that her mother's maid had died singing (*Oth.* IV, III). But the version adopted here (and most generally) from F. gives greater and harmonious spaciousness, as well as ingenious variety of pathos.—*Fantastic*, symbolically; though the meaning of this and that flower well may be, to us, uncertain; cp. IV, v, 167 ff.

8. *Crow-flowers*, either crow-foots (so called from the shape of the leaf) i. e., as still in North Midland use (*O.*), *buttercups*; or another *weed* of damp meadows (where all the flowers mentioned would be found in bloom at the beginning of Spring), namely "*ragged robin*" (Lat. *lychnis flos cuculi*, one of whose French names is *œillet des prés*), as Elizabethan nomenclature makes possible.

9. *Liberal*, in the sense, not uncommon then, of free from desirable restraint; here, *grossly* licentious in fancy and speech.

10. *Cold*, devoid of sensual heat.—*Fingers*. A botanist has pointed

There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds[1]
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver[2] broke;
When down her weedy trophies[3] and herself
Fell[4] in the weeping[5] brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up:
Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes[6],
As one incapable of[7] her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element[8]: but long it could not be
Till that[9] her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.[10]

Laer. Alas, then she is drown'd[11]?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,

out a confusion here between *long purples* and other orchids, distinguished by palmated roots.

1. *Pendent*; cp. note on the (far more uncommon) "*credent*" of I, III, 30.—*Coronet*, i. e. wreathed into light garlands for, or as if for (cp. n. 3), the head.

2. *Envious*; cp. p. 177 n.—*Sliver*, small branch, long and thin, looking almost as if it had been "slivered" i. e. split off.

3. *Trophies*, emblematic memorial garlands, made to be hung over her father's grave (Schmidt); cp. sc. V, 205; and contrast *weedy*.

4. *Fell*. When Sh. was 15, one Katharine Hamlet had been found drowned in the Avon, within the jurisdiction of the Stratford coroner (p. 206 n. 11); and the verdict, in English law Latin, had been: "per infortunium lapsit et cecidit," by mischance she slipt and fell.

5. *Weeping*; cp. 185-186.

6. *Which* i. e. during which.—*Chanted*; cp. quotation n. 1 p. 189.

7. *Incapable of*; p. 117 n. 5.

8. *Native*: related by birth.—*Indued*: endowed so as to be adapted.

9. *Till that*; cp. 62 n. and 159 n.

10. *To muddy death*. This narrative of Ophelia's end has sometimes been criticized as if it were evidence at law (e. g. Why did not whoever was present make some effort at least to save her?). Others have thought its length and "*fantastic*" elaborateness significant of the speaker's lack of real feeling. But is it not, pretty obviously, the poet's "*sweets to the sweet*," to use the Queen's phrase in V, I, 242? When ingenuously taken as such, its exquisitely pathetic beauty, not wholly of this world, will probably prevail over any considerations of actual likelihood or *a priori* canons of literary taste.

11. *She is drown'd*? Neither a mere question, that would sound idle (as in F, which has "*is she,*") nor (as in Q^1, which prints a full stop) at once, however pathetically, acquiescent.

And therefore I forbid my tears[1]: but yet
It is our trick[2]; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what[3] it will: when these are gone,
The woman[4] will be out. Adieu, my lord:
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts[5] it. [*Exit.*
King. Let's follow, Gertrude:
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let's follow. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V[6].

Scene I. *A churchyard.*

Enter two Clowns, *with spades and mattocks*[7].

First Clo. Is she to be buried in Christian burial[8] that wilfully seeks her own salvation[9]?

Second Clo. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight[10]: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial[11].

1. *Forbid my tears* to flow.
2. *Trick*, contrarious way, habit in defiance of reason.
3. *What*, whatever.
4. *The woman.* Cp. in, *Henry V*, IV, VI, 31, the description of the Duke of York's death, which makes the speaker say, "all my mother came into mine eyes."
5. *Douts* = does out = puts out (as *don* = do on, put on, and *doff* = do off, take off), extinguishes.
6. *Act V*; after an interval of presumably one or two days.
7. *With spades and mattocks*; quarto of 1676.—Original editions generally content themselves with the briefest possible stage-directions.
8. *In Christian burial.* Suicides were buried in ground purposely unconsecrated, on the North side of the church (Douce). Cp. however p. 221 n. 3.
9. *Salvation.* In pitching on a word meaning exactly the reverse of what he strives to say, the "clown" does just what the audience expected of him. Had not one of the foolish constables in *Much Ado*, III, III, 3, pronounced already that all who "were not good men and true" should "*suffer salvation*, body and soul"?
10. *Straight*, p. 93 n. 2.
11. *Crowner*, a popular anglicising of the semi-Latin "*coroner*" (an

First Clo. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

Second Clo. Why, 'tis found so.

First Clo. It must be ' se offendendo[1] '; it cannot be else. For here lies the point : if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act : and an act hath three branches[2]; it is, to act, to do, and to perform : argal[3], she drowned herself wittingly.

Second Clo. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver[4].

First Clo. Give me leave. Here lies[5] the water; good : here stands the man; good : if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he[6] goes; mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself : argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Second Clo. But is this law?

officer of the law, representing the Crown). Cp. a quotation in *N. E. D.* out of a xvnth century *Survey of Devon,* " If any man die in the forest, the coroner... shall *crown* him. "—*Sat* in judgment, held his inquest (with the assistance of twelve jurymen), as to the cause and manner of her death.—*Finds* (the technical word) it a case for *Christian burial.*

1. *Offendendo,* for its contrary (cp. l. 2). " *Se defendendo* " was the Latin phrase used in " findings " of the jury, when homicide (not suicide) had been committed in self-defence.

2. *Three branches.* Tschischwitz, according to whom such threefold division was characteristic of ancient Germanic usage, quoted, from Grimm and, apparently, some old French law in Latin, " *egeris, feceris, gesserisve.* "

3. *Argal,* a thick-tongued corruption of the Latin " *ergo* " (possibly under the influence of *argue*).

4. *Goodman* was prefixed, as here, to the designation of an occupation (other than liberal); also to names of people under the rank of gentlemen, e. g. in *Love's Labours Lost* and in *Much Ado,* Goodman Dull and Goodman Verges, constables both.—*Delver.* The speaker himself pretends to no such title, being apparently a mere help, with skill enough only to transmit orders, carry tools, fetch liquor, and assist in the less responsible part of the work.

5. *Here lies.* Cp.

Voici la chambre où j'entre en
[courrier que l'on mène;
Et cette lanterne est Alcmène,
A qui je me dois adresser.
(*Amphitryon,* I, 1.)

6. *Will he nill he* (in which " *nill* " is a contraction, already archaic then, except in such phrases, of " *ne will* ") survives as " willy nilly " (also = " will I nill I) and means : whether he consents or not, he cannot help it.—The third *he* is, of course, unlike the two first, stressed.

First Clo. Ay, marry, is't[1]; crowner's quest[2] law.

Second Clo. Will you ha' the truth on't[3]? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

First Clo. Why, there thou say'st[4] : and the more pity that great folk should have countenance[5] in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christen[6]. Come, my spade[7]. There is[8] no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers : they hold up[9] Adam's profession.

Second Clo. Was he a gentleman[10]?

First Clo. A[11] was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clo. Why, he had none.

First Clo. What, art[12] a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says[13] Adam digged : could he dig without arms[14]? I'll put another question[15] to thee : if thou answerest me not to the purpose[16], confess thyself[17]—

1. *Ay, marry, is't*; cp. I, IV, 13.

2. *Quest* = inquest.

3. Q^2 and F both print *ha* (but *have* in l. 24).—*On't*, F (*an't*. Q^2, which will also print *out a* for F's *out of*, 25) = of it.

4. *Thou say'st* it (Furness), the truth literally.

5. *Countenance*; cp. p. 166 n. 6.

6. *Even Christen* (= fellow-Christian; and here treated, because of *en*, as a plural), though still used by Latimer and other writers, fifty years before, is, no doubt, to be taken as a bit of archaic rusticity (smoothed down in F to "even Christian.")

7. *My spade.* Halliwell-Phillipps (writing in the sixties of the XIXth century), says that, "until within a very recent period," the clown would "preface his labours by divesting himself of half a dozen waistcoats; an operation which always created great merriment."

8. *There is*, III, IV, 202.

9. *Hold up*, keep up.

10. "*When Adam dalve* (= delv'd) [*and Evē span*, *Who was then a gentleman?*" the "clowns" fired by the leveller priest, John Ball, had sung, two centuries and a half before.

11. *A* (cp. IV, V, 178) in Q^2, which will make even the Prince of Denmark say "*a* sings," in l. 66, and "*a* find" in 202. Cp. p. XXI n. 8.

12. *Art*, etymologically, includes the pronoun; which the *t* represents.

13. *Says*, not, of course, literally.

14. *Arms.* Punning is one pretty constant (though far from a distinctive) element of clown's wit.

15. *Question.* Collections of such *Demaundes Joyous*, as they were then called, are probably still sold occasionally at fairs.

16. *To the purpose*, effectively, right.

17. *Confess thyself* a fool, pretty

Second Clo. Go to[1].

First Clo. What[2] is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Second Clo. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand[3] tenants.

First Clo. I like thy wit well, in good faith : the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill : now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church[4] : argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

Second Clo. ' Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter? ' 51

First Clo. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke[5].

Second Clo. Marry, now I can tell.

First Clo. To't.

Second Clo. Mass[6], I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO, *afar off*[7].

First Clo. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your[8] dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say ' a grave maker' : the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan fetch me a stoup of 60 [liquor.[9]

obviously. What the First Clown was going to add, to complete the phrase then current, was "*and he hanged.*"

1. *Go to*, here, most probably = go to work, begin. Cp. French *Vas-y*.

2. *What* : of what trade.

3. *A thousand*. As all offences technically termed "felonies," except "petty larceny" (i. e. the theft of goods under the value of twelve pence), were punishable with death, some of the gallows in England did "outlive" an appalling number of "tenants" in the course of a single year.

4. *The church*, which (spiritually) Christ "built" (Matt. XVI, 18).

5. *Unyoke* thy (apparently) ox-like wit, as no more labour will be demanded of it for the day.

6. *Mass*, II, I, 50.

7. *Afar off* (F) i. e. at the back of the stage; cp. p. 55 n. 3.

8. *Your*; cp. note on I, v, 167.

9. *Get thee*, I, I, 7.—*Yaughan* (who first appears in F., Q^2 being

[*Exit*[1] *Second Clown.*

[*He digs, and sings*[2]]

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract O the time, for a my behove[3],
O methought there a was nothing a meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

contented with "get thee *in*" i. e. within, in the stage sense: cp. p. 57 n. 7) must have been some well-known refresher of thirsty souls, not far off, the kéeper, in fact, of the ale-house attached to the theatre (if one then existed, as was the case in 1613). This sort of topical allusion would make the scene more enjoyably real to that part of the public which all this was largely intended to delight.—*A stoup* (with "ou" as in "soup") was a drinking-vessel, of variable shape and material of course (cp. next scene, where the "stoups" of l. 266 are the "*flagons*" of the stage-direction before l. 223), and also of varying capacity (here, presumably, a pint rather than a quart; which latter would be twice as much). —*Liquor*, namely "beer" Q[1].

1. *Exit* to reappear no more, it seems; being possibly wanted to make one of the "mourners" (p. 220).

2. *Sings* and lames and maims a vulgarised version, it seems, of one of the *Songs and Sonnets written by the right honorable Lord Henry Howard, late Earl of Surrey, and other* aristocratic composers of verse; published by Tottell in 1557. The title, in this highly fashionable and mainly amorous miscellany, was *The aged lover renounceth love* (cp. the denunciation of *Beauty* in n. 3 p. 211); and, in one manuscript copy, it is described as *A ditty or sonnet made by the lord Vaux, in the time of the noble queen Mary, representing the image of Death.* The first stanza, of which little more than the rhyme-words are preserved here, reads as follows: *I loathe that* (p. 16 n. 11) *I did love,*
In youth that I thought sweet;
As time requires, for my behove
Methinks, they are not meet.
A XVIth century tune to which it was sung is given in Furness.

3. Both this line and the next are printed here practically as in Q[2]. The five first words, Mr. Verity supposes to be a deformation (with "contract" in the same sense as "*contraction*," III, IV, 46, and "O the time" an exclamation of regre. for vanished youth) of "*tract* (i. e. space) *of time*" in Lord Vaux's second stanza,
And tract of time begins to weave
Gray hairs upon my head.
The (prosodically hopeless) *a's* in both lines, *Clar.* takes to mark a lingering (asinine here) on certain notes. As this singer "*digs*" while he sings (at l. 94, he will drive his *spade* in deeper, as he repeats the word), it has been suggested that both *O's* and *a's* might only accompany efforts in plying his tool. If one leaves them out, what remains looks not *altogether* unlike "to shorten the time for my benefit, when I was so sweetly employed, it seemed to me not meet at all."

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness[1].

Ham. 'Tis e'en[2] so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

First Clo. [*Sings*[3]]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil[4] the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull.*

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowls[5] it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone[6], that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches[8]; one that would circumvent[8] God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good-

1. *A property*, something (here, an occupation) proper to him.—*Of easiness* (cp. "of mercy," IV, VI, 20) = easy, not (morally) painful, indifferent (*O.*).

2. *E'en*, I, I, 121.

3. *Sings*, first, the two first lines of Lord Vaux's second stanza, only substituting "*clutch*" (almost tautological after "claw") for "*crutch*"; then, a third line, made unintelligible by being torn from the last stanza but one,

For Beauty with her bands
These crooked cares hath wrought.

And shipped me into the land
From whence I first was brought:

and, finally, an adaptation of the last line of the second stanza again,

And lusty life, away she leaps,
As (p. 30 n. 6) *there had been none such.*

4. *Intil*, still dialectal, in Northern England, for "into."

5. *Jowl* (with "ow" as in "bowl,"), still used dialectally, in the Midlands and elsewhere = bump (especially as regards the head).

6. *Cain's jaw-bone*, apparently, as Skeat pointed out, the *ass's* (cp. next line) jawbone with which, according to one mediæval tradition, Cain murdered Abel.

7. *Pate*, III, II, 9.—*Politician*, with the (then not uncommon) implication of dishonest craftiness. —*Which*; the ambiguousness of the pronoun (cp. IV, VIII, 4) is here an advantage.—*O'erreaches*; both literally, with his spade (cp. III, I, 17), and, figuratively, in cunning. The reading of F, "*o'eroffices*" (i. e. is superior to, in office) has no such picturesque aptness.

8. *Would*, emphatic.—*Circumvent*, in native English, "overreach".

morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord? 'I This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord. 86

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's[2]; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard[3] with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, and we had the trick to see it[4]. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats[5] with them? mine ache to think on it[6].

First Clo. [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and[7] a shrouding sheet: 95

1. *Good-morrow*, the current phrase then; and, for more than a century later, not uncommon.—*Sweet*: not then, in such forms of address, expressive of affection so intense and intimate as would now be implied.—*Thou*, affectionately familiar.—Instead of the second "sweet," F. has "*good*", implying variety, possibly of persons addressed (as "good" is more distant than "sweet"). certainly of tone; a distinct advantage, it seems.

2. *My Lady Worm's* property and residential mansion.

3. *Mazzard*, grimly jocular for "skull," from the likeness to a "*mazer*" or drinking-bowl. The two words are found used one for the other; nor has the barbarous practice of turning skulls into drinking-bowls been without "*mazers*" modern imitators, besides Byron, in his Newstead Abbey revels.

4. *Revolution* of Fortune's Wheel (*V.*).—*And* (Q^2) = "if" F; cp. p. 59 n. 4. — *Trick*, practical skill, knack.

5. *Did... but*: did the nourishing of these bones to full size cost so little as to justify their being of use only.—*Loggats* (apparently some sort of derivative of "logs"), stout sticks that are to be thrown as near as possible to some motionless object, called the jack (here, to Hamlet's imagination, figured, very likely, by the skull).

6. *Mine*. One thinks of the pathetic inscription (in language that would come home to sextons) over Sh.'s own grave, with its curse on whoever should "*move his bones*." More than once, as Prof. J. Q. Adams observes (*Life of Sh.*, p. 475), must he have seen the Stratford grave-diggers at such work, the bones going to swell the vast heap of their likes in the charnel-house that adjoined the church.—*On*; cp. e. g. III, II, 121.

7. *For and* (= "*and eke*" = and moreover), not uncommon in ballads, it seems.

O, a pit of clay for to[1] be made
For such a guest is meet[2].

[*Throws up another skull.*

Ham. There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer?[3] Where be his quiddits now, his quillets[4], his cases, his tenures[5], and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce[6] with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery[7]? Hum! This fellow might be in his time a great buyer of land[8], with his statutes, his recognizances[9], his fines, his double vouchers,

1. *For to*, a reinforcing of "to;" but apparently, here, without any *distinct* expression of purpose. Contrast p. 115 n. 4.

2. Cp. Lord Vaux's seventh and eight stanzas :

The harbinger of death,
To me I seem him ride;
The cough, the cold, the gasping breath,
Doth bid me to provide

A pickaxe and a spade,
And eke a shrouding sheet,
A house of clay for to be made,
For such a guest most meet.

3. *A lawyer.* That Sh. (before he found his way to the stage) had been employed in the office of one, has sometimes been fancied, on the strength of the many legal phrases and allusions in his works, and particularly of such passages as the following. The supposition seems unnecessary, if one keeps in mind, not only the large number of legal proceedings in which his father or himself appear to have figured, but (apart from possible observant visits to Westminster Hall) how much of lawyers' talk a London actor and successful playwright might hear from those active patrons of the stage, the members of the Inns of Court. Cp. end of n. 9 and n. 2 p. 214.

4. *Be*, III, II 106.—*Quiddits* (F.) jingles more effectively with "quillets" than the full word "*quiddities*" (Q²). The "quiddity" of a thing (scholastic Latin *quidditas*), being its "whatness," its essential nature, was proportionately difficult to define; and the word, in consequence, came to mean elusive distinction, captious subtlety.

4. *Quillet* (not recorded earlier) may be short for "quillity," itself possibly a corruption of "*quiddity*" again. The meaning here seems practically the same.

5. *Tenures*, the feudal term still in use; "*mode suivant lequel on tenait une terre*" (Littré).

6. *Sconce*, which sonorously echoes *knock*, was a jocular synonym for head, skull, especially as the stronghold (cp. p. 148 n. 5) of the intellect.

7. *His action of battery*, the action (III, III, 61) that he will bring against him for blows.

8. *Buyer of land*, as William Shakespeare did, in a smaller way, purchase, for instance, 107 acres of arable land near Stratford in 1602.

9. *Statutes*, not, here, Acts of Parliament, but Statutes-*Merchant* (or Statutes-*Staple*), which are bonds upon *land*.—*Recognizances* of debts. The author of the chapter on *Law* in *Sh.'s England* vol. I, Mr. A. Un-

his recoveries[1] : is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt?[2] will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures[3]? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box[4]; and

derhill, " one of the *conveyancing* (cp. 110) Counsel to the High Court of Justice, " wonders what " statutes and recognizances " could have to do with the buying *of land*, and suspects their appearance in this context to be one sign that Sh.'s knowledge of law was by no means so profound or accurate as has sometimes been fancied.

1. A *fine*, called so because " *finis et consummatio* (cp. III, i, 62) *omnium placitorum* ", putting an end to all litigation, was a compromise, before judgement, between parties to a collusive action in " common recovery. "—*Vouchers*, persons " vouched " (in the sense of called upon) to warrant the title of the defendant in an action in " common recovery " and *theoretically* (after judgement had been delivered, *as he himself desired*, against him) to compensate him for the loss; which it was privately agreed they never should have to do. —*Recoveries* (or " common recoveries ") were actions, instituted by some friendly plaintiff, *nominally to recover* from the defendant land entailed (Fr. *grevée de substitution*), *really* in order *to convey it back* to him afterwards, so that he should henceforth own it in fee simple (p. 173 n. 5), and could thus dispose of it as he pleased. The whole " costly farce, " was solemnly acted again and again between A. D. 1472 and 1833, when the first " Reformed " Parliament passed " an Act for the Abolition of Fines and Recoveries and for the Substitution of more simple Modes of Assurance. " (Cp. p. 215 n. 2 and *Sh's England*).

2. *The fine*, i. e. the final end. The legal phrase " fine and recovery " had already moved Sh.'s punning spirit in II, ii, 74-9 of the *Comedy of Errors* (played, in 1594, in Gray's Inn Hall; cp. end of n. 3 p. 213), but not (cp. n. 9 p. 213), as here, in accordance with the original meaning. In the sense of " end, " " fine " has survived the XVIIth century, but only in the phrase " *in fine*. "—*Recovery* sounds here almost like another, and very much lamer, pun (= covering over?)—*Fine pate*; " fine " is recorded in the sense of subtle, crafty, as late as the middle of the XVIIth century. —*Fine dirt*, in minute particles (*N. E. D.*).

3. *Vouch him*, warrant his title to.—*Double ones*. In simpler cases, one voucher (who always was the crier of the Court) was sufficient; in others, two were necessary.—*Indentures*, deeds between two (or more) parties, written in duplicate (or triplicate) on the same sheet of parchment, the parts being then severed in an *indented* (or in a wavy) line, so as to guard against forgery, as in the case of a cheque and its counterfoil.

4. *Conveyances*, deeds of conveyance, i. e. transferring property. —*This box*, which alludes to the boxes where clients' papers are kept in the offices of English " lawyers, " must refer to the

must the inheritor[1] himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance[2] in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose[3] grave is this, sirrah[4]?

First Clo. Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed : for thou liest in it[5].

First Clo. You lie out on't[6], sir, and therefore 'tis not yours : for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in it, to be in it and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick[7]; therefore thou liest.

First Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

coffin.—What might remain of it, when the skull could thus be "thrown up," is a question that troubled Sh. and his audience as little as the number of skulls within the space for one grave; the latter, a motive of surprise for honest Partridge (cp. p. 149 n. 7).

1. *Inheritor* (not a technical word; but cp. p. 9 n. 5), he that had come into such rightful (and desirable) possession.

2. *Assurance*, in its exclusively legal meaning, namely conveyance of lands or tenements by deed; and Hamlet, of course, plays on the word as well.

3. *Whose.* Critics who call attention to the fact that, in real life, Horatio (especially after IV, v, 65) would have been most likely to know, render the service of pointing out, once more, a way in which Sh. did *not* work (p. 11, middle).

4. *Sirrah* (derived from "sir," though with *i* short as e. g. in "mirror,"), a form of address strongly expressive of superiority, but here good-humoured.

5. *Be*, I, *i*, 108.—*Liest.* The pun occurs in Sh. half a dozen times.

6. *On't* = of it.

7. *Quick*, as in the Apostles' Creed, "He shall come to judge *the quick* (i. e. the living) *and the dead*." The chance of another facile pun will not be lost (129).

First Clo. For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in it? 13

First Clo. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest[1] he soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute[2] the knave is! we must speak by the card[3], or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord Horatio, this[4] three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked[5] that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe[6]. How long hast thou been a grave-maker? 14

First Clo. Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't tha day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

First Clo. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tel that: it was that very day that young Hamlet was born he that was mad, and sent into[7] England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England? 15

First Clo. Why, because a[8] was mad: a shall recove his wits there; or, if a do not, it's no great matter there

Ham. Why?

First Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there th men are as mad[9] as he. 15

Ham. How came[10] he mad?

1. *Rest*, may Heaven grant rest to.

2. *Absolute*, apparently here (as not uncommonly then) = decided, intransigent, absolutely insisting on the one right word being used.

3. *The card*, "the shipman's card" (*Macbeth*, I, III, 17) i. e. the compass-card, with its 32 points by which sailors steer; hence (as in next scene, l. 107) what one must guide oneself by. To *speak by the card* = to be exact (to a *point*) in the choice of one's words.

4. *This* (Qq.); cp. p. 124 n. 2 and e. g. "this twelvemonth."

5. *Picked*, exquisite (in the etymological sense), nicely precise (here in its picking, . e. choice, words).

6. *Kibe*, chapped chilblain (esp on the heel).

7. *Into* would now be "to simply.

8. A, Q[2] (*he*, F.); cp. p. XXI n. 8

9. *Mad*; an impression that, far as "eccentricity" goes, English men are sometimes apt to make o some other nations (cp. A. Che vrillon, *Shakespeare et l'âme anglais* p. 275-276 of *Trois Etudes de Lit Angl.* 1921) and which they, occa sionally, interpret as an unconscio homage on the part of the latter.

10. *Came* = became.

First Clo. Very strangely[1], they say.

Ham. How 'strangely'?

First Clo. Faith, e'en[2] with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground[3]? 160

First Clo. Why, here in Denmark. — I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty[4] years.

Ham. How long will a man lie in the earth ere he rot?

First Clo. I' faith, if a be not rotten before a die, a will last you some eight year or nine year[5]: a tanner will last you nine year. 166

Ham. Why he more than another?

First Clo. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that a will keep out water a great while; and your[6] water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now: this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years[7].

Ham. Whose was it?

First Clo. A mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was? 175

Ham. Nay[8], I know not.

First Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a poured a flagon of Rhenish[10] on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester[11]. 180

Ham. This?

First Clo. E'en that.

1. *Strangely*; cp. "strange" in I, v, 170.

2. *E'en* (as e. g. in 181 and 198), p. 11 n. 9.

3. *Upon what ground* (i. e. from what cause), a phrase selected for the sake of the punning (p. 4 n. 4) rejoinder.

4. *Thirty.* See Appendix *K.*

5. *Year.* Between this old flexionless plural and *years* the two first quartos and F. hesitate throughout the passage.

6. *Your* (cp. *you*, 165-6), III, II, 3.

7. *Three and twenty years* (both Q^2 and F). "This dozen year," Q^1 said; cp. p. 265.

8. *Nay*: don't ask me.

9. *Rhenish*, I, IV, 10.

10. *This same*; cp. III, IV, 172.

11. *Yorick*, supposed to be a corruption of either Roric or Eric or even Jörg, the last of which is a Danish form of George.—*King's jester.* Whether a post of "jester to (cp. p. 13 n. 7) the king," with fair emoluments, was restored or

Ham. Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it[1]. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft[2]. Where be your gibes[3] now? your gambols[4]? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on[5] a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen?[6] Now get you[7] to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour[8] she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord? 195

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion[9] in the earth?

not, after the fall of the Commonwealth, in favour of a courtier, Charles I, at least, had still kept a fool.

1. *Gorge*, what has been swallowed; originally what a hawk has in her gorge, i. e. crop; cp. "to gorge food."—*It*, the picture of that past which the present loathsome reality seems to have underlain *even then*.

2. *Oft*, III, III, 59.

3. *Be*, 94.—*Gibes*, scoffing speeches. "To coin bitter (i. e. biting) jests" is mentioned as part of a domestic jester's office in Lodge's *Wit's Misery and World's Madness* (1596).

4. *Gambols*. Lodge satirically described his jester as "in person, comely; in apparel, courtly; but, in behaviour, a very ape and no man; he dances about the house, leaps over tables, outskips men's heads, trips up his companions' heels..."

5. *On* (cp. "to set on fire") would, in this phrase, now be replaced by "in;" with some loss of active force, it seems.

6. *Chop-fallen*. Hamlet grimly plays on the literal sense of the phrase (with the lower *chop*, i. e. jaw, *fallen* or hanging down) and the figurative (looking dejected, because pulling a long face; cp. Fr. *faire visage allongé*.)

7. *Get you*, II, I, 6.—*Chamber*; Q^2 has "table" (as in l. 189), which would mean dressing-table.

8. *Favour*, from the sense of charm (as in IV, v, 177), passed into that of appearance, particularly of the face, whether attractive or the reverse.

9. *Alexander looked*. Sh., who, in his *Julius Caesar*, had attentively used three of Plutarch's *Lives* (as translated, mainly from Amyot's rendering, by North), may have read (towards the beginning of that which, of course, precedes Cæsar's) the remarks on the beauty of Alexander and his "very fair white colour mingled also with red;... his skin had a marvellous good savour, and... his breath was very

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it[1] stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously[2], to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it[3]: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into[4] dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam[5]; and why of[6] that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar[7], dead and turn'd to clay[8],
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away[9]:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe[9],

sweet, in so much that his body had so sweet a smell of itself that his apparel took thereof a passing (= passingly, exceedingly) delightful savour." Contrast L. 199.—*O'* (F; *a*, Q^4) apparently = "on," perhaps "of," either being then possible (as well as our "in" or "after").

1. *He* (cp. 33 n.), no personification of "imagination;" simply equivalent to "a *man's* imagination."—*Find*, both lighter and more vivid than the indicative would be.

2. *Consider*: reflect.—*Curiously*, in the (now archaic) sense of "with minute accuracy."

3. *Modesty*; cp. II, II, 438 and III, II, 18.—*It*, the imaginative process in question.

4. *Returneth*. This inflexion (constant e. g. in the *Bible* of 1611) was archaic enough already for Sh. not to have made much use of it in prose. Greater impressiveness may have been his object here.—*Into* (F.) "Pulvis es, et *in* pulverem reverteris" (*Genesis*, III, 19, in the *Vulgate*, as in the mass for Ash Wednesday); which, in the Authorized Version of 1611, became "dust thou art, and *unto* dust shalt thou return."

5. *Loam*. Fr. *torchis*.

6. *Of* (like Fr. "*de*") = with, as oftener then than now.

7. *Imperious* (Qq.), here = "imperial," F.—*Caesar*, to whom the imagination would turn after Alexander, even without the assistance of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

8. Stone-houses were still few, even in the cities and "good towns" of England; and, where timber was scarce, "thick clay" was "cast" over the whole slight frame work "to keep out the wind" (Harrison; cp. p. 195 n. 5).

9. *O that*: O, to think that.—*That earth*, that "piece of earth" (*Julius Cæsar*, III, I, 254), made

Should patch a wall, t' expel the winter's flaw[1]!
But soft! but soft! aside : here comes the king,

Enter[2] Priests, etc. *in procession*; *the Corpse of Ophelia*, LAERTES *and* Mourners *following*; KING, QUEEN, *their trains*, etc.

The queen, the courtiers : who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse[3] they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life[4] : 'twas of some estate[5].
Couch we[6] awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with Horatio.*
Laer. What ceremony[7] else?
Ham. That is Laertes[8],
A very noble youth : mark.
Laer. What ceremony else?
First[9] *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd

distant, not only by lapse of time, but also (cp. Latin *ille*) by the might that *kept the world in awe*. The jangling of the two *that 's* is, besides, intentional; see next note. —*Awe*; cp. *Julius Ceasar*, passim; e. g. III, II, 123-4.

1. *Should*, expressing logical supposition.—*Flaw*, sudden burst and gust of wind.—These four lines are, doubtless, an improvisation of Hamlet, in pitiful mockery of such doggerel in general (the clipped *t'* has been preserved here in consequence); of the once mighty Caesar, its theme; of himself, its author; and even of the emotion, deeply as he feels it. Cp. in III, II, perhaps 256-259, almost certainly 266-269, the parody in 278-279, and, in the present scene, 292-293.

2. *Enter*. The following stage-direction, now usual, is Capell's (1768). Of the three earliest editions (on the character of whose indications, in general, cp. p. 15 n. 4 and p. 206 n. 7), the least summary, here, (Q^1) has " *Enter King and Queen, Leartes, and other lords, with a Priest after the coffin* " (apparently open, 249). To Capell's " Priests etc. in procession " it has been objected that it scarcely agrees with *maimed rites* (218); and F, no less clearly than Q^1, intends a single priest to appear. But Q^2's *Enter K. Q. Laertes and the corse* is obviously incomplete. Cp. n. 9, also p. 137 n. 7, p. 177 n. 2.

3. *Corse*, I, II, 105.

4. *Fordo*, II, I, 102.—*It*, p. 5 n. 7.

5. *Estate*, p. 132 n. 7.

6. *Couch we* (p. 5 n. 6) : let us lie hidden, conceal ourselves.

7. *Ceremony*. Cp. IV, V, 205-7.

8. Both Q^2 and F (*not* inexplicably) make prose of *That is... mark*; but the emotional situation may justify something like the emphasis of verse.

9. *First*, a consequence of adopting Capell's direction, and appar-

As we have warrantise[1] : her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order[2],
She should in ground unsanctified[3] have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet[4]; for[5] charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her :
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants[6],
Her maiden strewments[7], and the bringing home
Of bell and burial[8].

Laer. Must there no more be done?

First Priest. No more be done :
We should profane the service of the dead.
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted[9] souls.

ently countenanced by Q²'s "*Doctor,*" which seems to imply the presence of at least one other clergyman, of less authority.

1. *Enlarg'd*; contrast *maimed* in 218.—*Warrantise* (F¹) = "warranty" Q² = authorisation.

2. *But* : if it were not.—*Great command* (the king's, of course); the dropping of the indefinite article adds to the impression of authority not to be matched.—*O'ersways*, overrules, prevails over.—*Order*, course prescribed (by the Church).

3. *Ground unsanctified*; cp. note on l. 1. Q¹'s version is,
"*She had* (i. e. should have) *been buried in the open fields*;" at cross-roads, with a stake driven through the body, if the law carried out had been that of England, then and for two centuries longer.

4. *The last trumpet*, "for the trumpet shall sound" (St. Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, XV, 52), and the dead shall hear "and shall come forth : they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (*Gospel according to St. John*, V, 29).

5. *For* = instead of. Cp. I, III, 131.

6. *Virgin* (making, like "maiden" in the next line, a compound noun with the following word), meet for a virgin.—*Crants* (for which F. has "*rites*," vague and, besides, awkwardly recalling 218), a plural that echoes the German singular (*Kranz*, wreath), may have been intended (like "*corance*," one English form of the singular, found in *Alphonsus*; cp. App. *C*) for a touch of Germanic colour. Garlands (of white paper) for a girl's funeral, are, however, mentioned by this name as hanging in a Yorkshire church in the middle of the XIXth century.

7. *Strewments* (a rare word) : things (here, flowers) strewed (here, on the coffin). Cp. e. g. p. 45 n. 6.

8. *Home*, the long home, the last.—*Of*, apparently : consisting of, with.—*Bell*, bell tolled when the body is carried to the place of "*burial.*" At least one bell of *some* sort was among the properties of the Globe (*Macbeth*, II, I, 32); and a tolling *may* have been heard at I: 216.

9. *To*, more direct than "for."

Laer. Lay her in the earth :
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish[1] priest,
A ministering[2] angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.
Ham. What, the fair Ophelia[3]!
Queen. Sweets to the sweet : farewell!
[*Scattering flowers.*
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd[4], sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.
Laer. O, treble woe
Fall[5] ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense[6]
Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms :
[*Leaps into the grave.*
Now pile your dust[7] upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'ertop old Pelion[8], or the skyish[9] head

Peace-parted (a compound not recorded elsewhere), having "departed" (from this life) "in peace."

1. Early senses of "churl" are peasant, and even serf, and the speaker is a lord (cp. Macaulay's remarks on the antagonism between the spirit of the Roman hierarchy and feudal distinctions of caste, *Hist. Engl.* ch. I). *Churlish* = boorish, ungracious, grudging, niggardly (here, of the "rites" of the Church).

2. *Ministering*, a "minister of grace," I, iv, 39.—*Liest howling*, in "the profoundest pit," IV, v, 122.

3. *The fair Ophelia!* the phrase again of III, i, 89. The Queen it is that will sigh "*the sweet*".

4. *Have decked.* On this use (condemned by XIXth cent. grammarians) of the present perfect infinitive, after verbs of thinking, to express the unfulfilled (cp. "*shouldst have been*", 243) see Abbott § 360.

5. *Fall*; cp. III, ii, 195 ff.

6. *Ingenious* could still mean, a hundred years ago, intelligent, discerning; here, quick and delicate in apprehension, II, ii, 304 (contrast, to some extent, "noble and *most sovereign* reason," III, i, 157).—*Sense*, here = power of mental perception.

7. *Dust*, 209.

8. *Pelion*, which the Titans endeavoured to tear from its base and *pile* up on another mountain of Thessaly, *Ossa* (l. 273), in order to scale *Olympus*.

9. *Skyish* (not found elsewhere, it seems, except under the influence of this passage) : so lofty as to near, or (cp. "*blue*," next line) lose itself in, the sky.

Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars[1], and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded[2] hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane[3]. [*Leaps into the grave*[4].

Laer. The devil take thy soul!
[*Grappling with him.*

Ham.[5] Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not spleenative and rash[6], 260
Yet have I something in me dangerous[7],
Which let thy wisdom fear: hold off thy hand.

1. *Conjures*, like an incantation, casts a spell on.—*Wandering stars.* Etymologically, planets means wanderers, "because they never keep one certain place or station in the firmament" (Cotgrave's *Dict.*).—*Stand*, I, I, 2.

2. *Wonder-wounded*, struck with wonder, so to have lost the power of moving on.

3. *The Dane*, the Prince, *if* not rightfully more (cp. I, I, 15 etc.), of Denmark.—A strange time for claiming, or proclaiming, his royal rank, a commentator remarks; to which it has been replied that H. answers, as regards himself, the question he has put in l. 253, and answers it in a spirit of challenge.

4. *Into the grave*, as if "he would die there," according to the author of an elegy on Burbage (1619), who created the Shakespearean part.

5. *Hamlet*, with superior (and *alarmingly* gentle) irony, for he now towers above Laertes by all the consciousness of his princely nature, as well as rank.

6. *Spleenative* (a form, found later still, of the adjective that became "*splenetive*" and is now replaced by "splenetic,"), apt to give way to sudden impulses of anger, one of the emotions of which the *spleen* was supposed to be the seat.—This denial, in advance, on the hero's part, that he was a man "of purely convulsive energies" (Coleridge), Sh. could not expect his audience to take as palpable self-delusion Nor must one forget, at least, that neither his action in III, IV, when he thought he was killing "*the king*", nor the "hoisting" of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern "*with their own petard,*" was anything else than the fulfilment, when occasion offered, of deliberate resolve. Here, on the other hand, the leaping into the grave *is* an impulsive act, "outrageously" so, no doubt, as Mr. Clutton-Brock noted, but also, he added, theatrically most effective and, psychologically, best explained by imitation, at once instinctive (cp. p. 175 n. 9) and satirical (cp. e. g. l. 264) of what Laertes had done.

7. Cp. e. g., I, IV, 85, and note, presently, the repeated intervention (l. 263 and 273) of the king, whose "wisdom fears" for Laertes. Cp. p. 26 n. 2.

King. Pluck them asunder.
Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!
All. Gentlemen,—
Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*
Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme[1]
Until my eyelids will no longer wag[2].
Queen. O my son, what theme?
Ham. I lov'd Ophelia[3] : forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity[4] of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
King. O, he is mad, Laertes.
Queen. For love of God, forbear[5] him.
Ham.[6] 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do :
Woo't[7] weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

1. *Theme* = subject, though to be treated by *action*, not by speech merely.

2. *Will no longer wag* (with emphatic "*will*") i. e. stir, however slightly, being closed in sleep from utter weariness.

3. *I loved Ophelia*, to whom there has been no sign that he had given a thought since he insultingly jeered her in III, II. Nor will he (or any one else) mention her again, after this scene. And yet not only must he obviously be sincere (for which the shock, on suddenly discovering whose grave this is to be, would account amply); but there will be no indication that his case is one of momentary self-delusion.—"It is the strangest love-story on record," Dowden owned. One of the mismanaged things in the play, is the verdict e. g. of J. M. Robertson: and, with such a fierce main theme, a hero of such height and range (so discursive too and even digressive) and the risk of a too inadequate heroine, Sh. well may have felt "as little inclined to complicate matters, by exhibiting Hamlet's love for Ophelia", as by displaying, in *Othello*, Desdemona's filial, or, in *Lear*, Cordelia's conjugal, affection (Stoll).

4. *Quantity*, probably with a significant implication of very definite limits; cp. p. 119 n. 4. In some other passages of Sh., the word by itself means exiguous portion.

5. *Forbear him*, do not give way to resentment against him; leave him alone. Cp. 286-90.

6. *Hamlet*, possibly taking his cue for "ranting" from Claudius's "*O, he is mad.*" Cp. 275.

7. *Woo't*, then one of the very familiar (and still of the dialectal) forms of *wilt* (which Q[1] has, and M. A. Bayfield indignantly argues that Sh. surely wrote).—For the absence of pronoun, cp. "*art*," 34.

Woo't drink up eisel[1]? eat a crocodile?
I'll do it[2]. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?[3]
Be buried quick with her, and so will I :
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground[4],
Singeing his pate against the burning zone[5],
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth[6],
I'll rant[7] as well as thou.
Queen. This is mere madness :
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon[8], as patient as the female dove,
When that[9] her golden couplets[10] are disclos'd,

1. *Up* (much like "off" here), eagerly or, at least, without flinching.—*Eisel* (O. Fr. *aisil* = late Lat. "*acetillum,*" diminutive of "acetum," vinegar), which occurs in *Sonnet* CXI, 10 (with the spelling "Eysell") and passed out of use only in the course of the XVIIth century, is Theobald's interpretation of Q²'s "Esill" and F.'s "*Esile*". The latter is italicised, as if it were a proper noun; which has led commentators to hunt for some river-name of analogous sound, and even (under the influence of the "*crocodile*" that follows), to suggest "*Nilus*" = the Nile, as e. g. in *Antony and Cleopatra.* Vinegar for drink, and crocodile for meat, in token of bereaved love, would however be almost as hard a penance as the "*fast*" proposed just before; and both fully accord with the vein of bitterly contemptuous burlesque that runs through these lines (*V.*).

2. *Do it,* The pause, with a sense of storm in the air still, after this makes up, even in strict prosody, for the smaller number of syllables in the line.

3. *Outface,* put out of countenance by "*bravery*" (p. 233 n. 12).—*With* = by.—*In,* p. 154, n. 3.

4. *Our ground,* the ground under which we shall be buried; cp. such phrases as "to be laid in the ground," i. e. buried.

5. *His,* I, 1, 37.—*Pate;* the *wholly* serious use of the word must have been getting archaic already; cp. III, II, 10.—*The burning zone,* the fiery circle (of the sun in its course).

6. *Nay,* don't be mistaken; cp. III, II, 56.—*And,* I, v, 176.—*Mouth,* utter words with pompous affectation.

7. *Rant,* declaim in extravagantly bombastic language.

8. *Anon* = a little while after.

9. *When that,* cp., p. 197, n. 13.

10. *Golden couplets.* Two is the usual number of a dove's brood; and the chicks, when "disclosed" (III, I, 166), are still, in spite of their yellow down, much in need of the kindly warmth of the hen. She, it is said, for the first three days, "*sits*" (289) in the nest almost uninterruptedly.—With this account of Hamlet's condition cp. p. 163 n. 2, p. 164, n. 3.

His silence will sit drooping.
Ham. Hear you, sir[1]; 290
What is the reason that you use me thus[2]?
I lov'd you ever[3] : but it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day[4]. [*Exit.*
King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*To Laertes*] [*Exit Horatio.*
Strengthen your patience in[5] our last night's speech;
We'll put the matter to the present push[6].— 297
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son[7].—
This grave shall have a living monument[8] :

1. *Hear you*, II, i, 6.—*Sir*; the formal mode of address, here, expresses distant superiority.

2. The remark could not fail to be made that his behaviour in this scene, after the death of Polonius at least (if he had not yet realised his share in that of Ophelia), might be a sufficiently apparent "*reason*". But Hamlet is made generously to judge from his own feelings only (l. 222 and 291); and was it not a *necessity* of the plot in fact, that he should, be "free, ", in the sense of IV, vii, 134, from all suspicion of enmity in this quarter?

3. *I loved you ever*; words, the emotional effect of which on the audience is, of course, heightened by knowledge of IV, vii, 140-8.

4. The first line of this couplet is, to all appearance, an improvisation (cp. 215 n.); of the second line, the alliterative latter half was a familiar expression. Its proverbial [character is here accentuated by the absence of any article before "*dog* " (cp. III, ii, 158).—*Day* = day of power (*N. E. D.* quotes e. g. from a letter of Elizabeth, in 1550, to her sister, then Queen Mary, "as a dog hath a day, so may I perchance... "). As regards Hamlet's application of the two lines, he had already compared himself, however unfavourably, with *Hercules*, in I, ii, 153 (where see note), Laertes, had sprung at his throat like a *dog*; and the discordant strains of "his grief" may have suggested "*the cat will mew.*" The general idea; thus put into verse, intentionally contemptible so as to be more palpably contemptuous (cp. p. 220 n. 1), appears, in any case, to be : let Hercules himself strive as he may to "set the world right" (I, v, l. 190), even he cannot change the nature of creatures and the course of things which, for a time, will set up the *unworthy* (III, ii, 74).

5. *In* = grounding it, as it were, in the memory of.

6. *Present* = immediate.—*Push* = attempt, trial, test.

7. Furness and Dowden thus isolate the line to make it clear that 299-301 will not reach the ear of Gertrude (or of any one except Laertes), any more than 296-297 had done. The Queen's attention, one may imagine, is now given to arrangements with some courtier or courtiers for "*watching over her son.*"

8. *Shall*, is sure to, as my will is that it shall. Both from 296-29

An hour of quiet[1] shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.*

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir : now shall you see[2] [the other;
You do remember all the circumstance[3]?
Hor. Remember it, my lord!
Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep : methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes[4]. Rashly[5],—
And[6] prais'd be rashness for it : let us know,
Our indiscretion[7] sometimes serves us well,

and from 300, the general meaning of the line seems clear: this death shall be made memorable (which is the purpose of a *monument*) by another, soon to come. The difficulty that remains relates to *living*, which may mean simply (and, in such a phrase, most naturally) *keeping alive the memory* of the death and of the dead, but by which Claudius well may also, darkly, murderously, remind his accomplice that Hamlet is *living still*, not the corpse he should be.

1. *Quiet*, rather weak and perhaps due to the cramping influence of the "exit couplet." Note also the repetition of *patience* from 295.

2. *Sir*, cp. III, II, 260-3; Hamlet here too, exults, though not wildly.—*Now*; really, of course, because it is with the general character of *this* final scene (Rowe's division) that what has to be told us best agrees.— *Shall you see*, I will make clear to you.

3. *Circumstance*, III, II, 71.

4. *Mutines* = mutineers; cp. III, IV, 83.—A *bilbo* (apparently from Bilboa, an English corruption of Bilbao, the name of a town in Biscay, once famous for the manufacture of iron and steel) was a long iron bar, with a lock that could be fixed to the floor of the ship, and sliding shackles for more than one prisoner. Every motion of each partner in confinement was sure to disturb the others.

5. *Rashly*, without weighing the chances of success, and, so far, impulsively (but cp. p. 223 n. 6).

6. *And* (cp. again l. 9) marks the beginning of one of those philosophical and moralising parentheses of which I, IV, 23-39, was essentially, though not grammatically, another significant instance.

7. *Indiscretion*, " *manque de*

When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us[1]
There's a divinity that shapes our ends[2],
Rough-hew them how we will[3],—
Hor. That is most certain.
Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd[4] about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them; had[5] my desire,
Finger'd[6] their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making[7] so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to[8] unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—
O royal knavery!—an exact command,
Larded with many several[9] sorts of reasons

retenue " (Littré), " *rashness*; " cp. p. 15 n. 7.

1. *Do*, though not stressed and possibly suggested by euphony, reinforces the assertion.—*Pall* (in both Q^2 and F.) must mean something like " fail, " a use not impossible to develop from such other senses of the word as " to become faint " (here, *ineffectual*, I, v, 90).—*Learn* (Q^2), often = " *teach* " (F), even in educated speech, long after Sh.

2. *Our ends*, the *ends*, i. e. results, *of our actions*.—For the thought, cp. p. 244 n. 5. As regards Hamlet's declaration here, cp. 204-205 and note. From the point of view of technique, it has the advantage of accounting for wonderful coincidences, such as his carrying in his purse a copy of the Danish royal seal (49-50), without making them, for Sh.'s audience, less dramatically striking.

3. *Rough-hew*, carve roughly, " *shape* " crudely.—For the punctuation (*Clar.*) after *will*, instead of the original full stop, cp. pp. 27, n. 4 and 235 n. 6.

4. *Sea-gown*, " a coarse, high-collared, and short-sleeved gown, reaching down to the mid-leg " (Cotgrave, s. v. *Esclavine*).—*Scarf'd*, thrown as loosely as a scarf.

5. *Them* was syntactically stressed, as well as prosodically; so is *had*. The slightly elliptic syntax scarcely needs such philological justification as could be given for e. g. the " *keeps* " of III, i. 8. Repeating the pronoun would have been idle practically; and the time spoken of (the excitement of which Hamlet feels again as he speaks; note the eager " *wilt thou hear?* " of l. 27, and l. 36, " *wilt thou know?* ") was not a time for idling. Cp. l. 51-53.

6. *Finger'd*, laid my fingers on: a humorously graphic euphemism, by no means special to Sh., for " filched, stole. "

7. *Making*, a short cut, again, for something like " where I now made so bold, " i. e. behaved so boldly, took such liberty.

8. *To*; " as " being, not very exceptionally, dropped.

9. *Larded* (cp. IV, v, 37) = thickly enriched, as with a kind of garniture to its " exactness " (*exact*, here = Fr. *exprès*).—*Several*, expressly distinct one from the other.

Importing Denmark's health[1] and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life[2],
That[3], on the supervise, no leisure bated,[4]
No, not to stay[5] the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off[6].

Hor. Is it possible?

Ham. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me[7] how I did proceed?

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus be-netted[8] round with villanies,—
Or I could make a prologue[9] to my brains,
They had begun the play,—I sat me down[10],
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it[11] fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists[12] do,

1. *Import*, a verb of varied acceptations, especially then (e. g. I, I, 23; III, II, 133; IV, VII, 80). It appears to mean here, as in other instances some of them much later), to be important for, to bear gravely on. — *Health*, I, III, 21.

2. *Bugs* (cp. "bughear," originally, and still in *Troilus and Cressida*, goblin in the shape of a bear) = imaginary, or grossly exaggerated, causes of terror.—The strain in which Claudius must have written, we know, in fact, explicitly from IV, III, 58-60.—*In my life* = in case I should be suffered to live.

3. *That*, governed by "*command*," four lines higher, 20-22 being, quite in the manner of Claudius, heavily (as Hamlet can be nimbly) parenthetic.

4. *Supervise* (cp. "*avouch*," I, I, 57) = first reading *over*.—*Bated*, being deducted from immediateness of execution.

5. *Stay* = wait for; III, III, 95.

6. *My head... off.* The syntactical effect of the brief, most significant, close, after so much preamble, is not unlike that of "*taken to wife*" in I, II, 14.

7. *Me* tell: one of the turns that Elizabethan syntax had in common with Greek, for instance.

8. *Be-netted*. The idea that "*round*" will emphasize is already expressed in the prefix.

9. *Or* (for which F. has "*ere*.") Cp. I, II, 183, and note.—*Make a prologue*, a professional metaphor (cp. III, II, 29, I, I, 123, and IV, V, 18), the meaning of which, here, is "formally introduce the matter."

10. *They*, i. e. my brains (*J.*). —*The play*, the *action* itself.—*Me*, in strict philology a dative, it seems (Franz, p. 30).

11. *Devis'd*, contrived in my mind, thought out in all its parts — *Wrote it*. The style of writing implied, this being a State letter, would seem to be the luminous Italian script, which Henry VIII had already made his children learn most carefully, though he himself wrote (as Sh. still did, the variety of Gothic hand called English (Sir E. M. Thompson, vol. II of *Sh.'s England*).

12. *Statists*, in the sense, then common, now obsolete, of men

A baseness[1] to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service[2] : wilt thou know
The effect[3] of what I wrote?
Hor. Ay, good my lord.
Ham. An earnest conjuration[4] from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary[5],
As love between them like the palm might flourish[6],
As peace should still her wheaten garland[7] wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities[8],

skilled, or powerful, in affairs of State, statesmen.

1. *A baseness*, a sign of low rank, the mark of a mere professional of the pen. Sir E. M. Thompson, though he warns us against a sweeping condemnation of the handwriting of most Elizabethan statesmen, describes as a "straggling scrawl" that of their Royal Mistress, though, before mounting the throne, she would still occasionally show herself an adept at the Italian calligraphy learnt when a child (p. 229 n. 11).

2. *Yeoman's service*, a phrase (not special to Sh.) meaning good and faithful service. The yeoman of a knight, for instance, ranked between squire and page. Cp. p. 13, n. 1.

3. *Effect* (I, III, 45) and more (181-2).

4. *Conjuration* = adjuration (as long still after Sh.).

5. *As*, inasmuch as.—*England*, IV, III, 57.—*Tributary*, IV, III, 60-1.

6. *As* surely as he wished (whence *might*) that.—*Like the palm... flourish*: a Biblical comparison (Psalm XCII, 12, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree").

7. *As*, again referring to a desirable result.—*Her wheaten garland*, a symbol of plenty, recalls, however indirectly, such invocations, in Latin poetry, as Ovid's

"*Flava Ceres, tenues spicis redimita capillos.*"

i. e. "Ceres, of the fair light hair, wreathed with ears of corn."

8. *'Tween*, short for *between*.—*Amities*, still used, in the singular at least, of friendly relations between States.—The difficulty lies in *comma*, which some understand in its obsolete sense of "short member of a sentence" (Fr. *incise*); between amity and amity, peace should stand like a *dependent* clause (Dowden). It has been argued, however that the sign of punctuation called thus *stands between* two several members of a sentence, *without separating* them—otherwise than by distinguishing the one from the other. Contrasted with such a note of "disruption" as the "period," or full stop, it might almost be called, as Johnson observed, a "*note of connection*," actually representing sometimes a *copula*, understood from a preceding clause, or an omitted *relative*. When, in fact, F. (availing itself of the practice, then frequent, of inserting a comma after the phrase forming the logical subject), printed l. 40 thus :

And many such-like ' As' es of great charge[1],
That, on the view and knowing[2] of these contents,
Without debatement[3] further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd[4].

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, ev'n in that was heaven ordinant[5].
I had my father's signet[6] in my purse,
Which was the model[7] of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ[8] up in the form of the other,
Subscrib'd it, gave it the impression[9], plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known[10]. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent[11]

As love between them, as the Palm [should flourish, the effect intended was certainly not disruptive, suggestive rather of what the present line seems to figure.

1. *As'es* would have been pronounced like " *asses* " by Johnson himself, a century and a half later than Sh., according to Malone, who tells us that this remained, in his time (1790), the usual Midland pronunciation. Hamlet no doubt plays on the sound, so as to do more than suggest the *asinine* character (cp. III, II, 260) of the considerations thus elaborately brayed out.—*Of great charge* : adding to the " earnest conjuration " much weight; but the phrase is intended also to accord (as if meaning heavily loaded) with the quibble on *as'es*.

2. *Knowing*, shortened to " *I:now*" (cp. I, I, 57 n.) in F, apparently to *regularise* scansion. Cp. p. XXI.

3. *Debatement* (not special to Sh.) = debate, here within oneself.

4. *Not* (even) *shriving-time* (being) *allowed*. Cp. I, II, 182, and the soliloquy at the close of III, III.

5. *Heaven*, uttered with thoughtful deliberateness; contrast I, I, 49 and passim, and cp. remark on *devil*, p. 103, n. 7.—*Ordinant* passed from French into scholarly English in the XVth century.

6. *Signet*, small seal, for communications of a less official or public character.

7. *Model*, in the sense, now less usual, of accurate representation of an original, exact *copy*.—*Danish* : of *the Dane* (I, I, 15).

8. *Folded*; cp. note on " had, " 14.—*Writ*, thing writ (I, II, 27).

9. *Subscrib'd it*, wrote (Claudius's) signature to it.—*Gave it the impression*, sealed it.

10. *Changeling*, properly a child left by fairies *in exchange* for one that they have stolen. The sally is one more sign (*p.* 230 n. 3) of the gusto with which the story is told.—*Never known*, another short cut; cp. n. 4.

11. *Sequent* (i.e. following) belongs to the same fine category of words as " *ordinant*, " at the beginning of this speech, and e. g. " *crescent* " and " *credent*, " in I, III, 11 and 30.

Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to it[1].

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment[2];

They are not near my conscience[3]; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow[4]:
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature[5] comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points[6]
Of mighty opposites[7].

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon[8],—

1. *To it*, the significantly slurred *it* being instant death.

2. The line (not in the quartos) leaves little room for doubt as to the tone in which Horatio had spoken, that of a man whose mind was not quite made up *yet* as to the justice of "*it.*"—*This employment.* But, it has been judicially asked, *did* they know what the "letters" contained? Both in Saxo and in Belleforest, they do, quite well; nor has Sh. given us the slightest reason to doubt the readiness of the pair to undertake *any* "employment" for "*such thanks*
As fits a king's remembrance," II, II, 25-26.

3. *Are not near*, i. e. do not touch, affect. "I cannot quite get over that affair," Stopford Brooke wrote (*Ten more Tragedies of Sh.* 1910); "I only see in it the cunning almost of a madman.... Moreover, it is a mistake in art to link Hamlet with the king in a treacherous and murderous action. ... has been said, on the other hand, that we should welcome the assurance that the pair of court spies will not encumber the earth long; and this was certainly part of what Sh. expected his audience to feel,—just as he could count on their relishing the perfect accord between the general character of a tragedy of revenge and the Prince of Denmark's retaliatory resourcefulness.

4. *Defeat*; cp. II, II, 570.—*Insinuation* = sinuous, artful, intrusion.—*Does... grow* = is produced.

5. *Dangerous* for the "baser nature;" *baser* in the sense here of "not so highly born" merely. The speaker is a Prince (cp, e. g., p. 230. n. 1); and neither, Sh.'s audience nor Sh. himself were social levellers.

6. *The pass and... points*: the points of the swords at the time of a pass, i. e. a lunge or thrust (as in French).

7. *Opposites* = opponents, as often in the XVIth century.

8. *Thinks't* (for F.'s "*thinkst*") i. e. *thinks it*; an emendation that has generally found favour. Q[2]'s "*thinke*" may be a misprint for "*thinks*" (*Clar.*). The verb, in either case, appears to be that which still survives, archaically, in "*methinks*" (99) and represents the Old English "thincan" (G. "*dünken*") to *seem*, not "thencan" (G. "denken,") to have a thought. —*Stand me... upon* = be imperative for me. In this often misconstrued

He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my mother[1],
Popp'd in[2] between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper[3] life,
And with such cozenage—is it not[4] perfect conscience,
To quit[5] him with this arm? and is it not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature[6] come
In[7] further evil?

Hor.[8] It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more[9] than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes[10] I forgot myself;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours[11]:
But, sure, the bravery[12] of his grief did put me

phrase (still used by Locke at the end of the XVIIth century and surviving dialectally) "*stand upon*" (cp. Latin "instare") = touch closely, concern directly, and the pronoun apparently is a *dative* (= to me, for me), *not* governed by the preposition (Abbott § 204).

1. *My king.* Cp. p. 45 n. 4; also III, IV, 29.—*Whor'd*, most violent for "made a shamelessly debauched woman of."

2. *Popp'd in*, onomatopœically familiar and contemptuous for "suddenly came in," burst in with a sound of *pop*, as it were.

3. *Angle*: fishing-hook.—*Proper*, used (in a way that would now be archaic) to emphasize the possessive adjective.

4. *Is it not.* The argumentative parenthesis accounts for the change of construction quite naturally.

5. *Quit* = requite, repay.

6. *Canker*, I, III, 39.—*Our nature*, human nature, mankind.

7. *In*, apparently = "*into*" (cp. e. g. l. 279 of the preceding scene), "come into" meaning here "pass on to."

8. *Horatio*, to whose sympathetic, but critical, mind it may not be clear that, in spite of vehemence of speech and, possibly (at l. 68, "*this* arm,"), of gesture, *action* will follow in time to be successful.

9. *A man's life's no more*: taking a man's life requires no more time. The grim self-possession that makes itself audible in these two lines seems convincing, as to the speaker's mind being really made up—however promptly he turns to a more congenial subject (on which point, though, see n. 11).

10. *Laertes*, "a very noble youth," V, I, 223.

11. Humane and *courteous* feelings, by no means foreign to Sh.'s Prince of Denmark, and the expression of which was necessary to smooth the way to his acceptance of the fencing-match, too crudely improbable otherwise.

12. *Bravery*, in the sense of bravado, challenging display.

Into a towering passion[1].

Hor. Peace! who comes here?

Enter Osric[2].

Osr. Your lordship is right[3] welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know[4] this waterfly?[5]

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious[6]; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast[7] be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess[8]: 'tis a chough[9]; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt[10].

Osr. Sweet lord[11], if your lordship were at leisure,

1. *Passion*, here violent anger.

2. *Enter Osric*, "young Osric," (l. 195; cp. 105-6), as the direction in F already calls him here.

3. *Right*, intensive (=truly, indeed).

4. *Dost* (p. 208 n. 12) *know* (turning to Horatio, and "aside" to him).

5. *Water-fly*. "A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason" (Johnson); and the short, wing-like, cloak then worn may have assisted in justifying the metaphor.

6. *Gracious*. The particular shade of meaning here is made clearer by the reason that immediately follows. Cp. I, IV, 33.

7. *A beast*, III, IV, 190.

8. *His*, i. e. Osric's.—*Crib*, manger, as for cattle.—*Shall*, III, I, 176.—*Mess* (O. F. *mes*; later, *mets*), from the sense of a serving of food, passed to that of a group (originally small) sitting at table together and eating from (and then of) the same dishes.

9. *Chough* (with "ough" sounded as in "enough,"); one more derisive metaphor from the "animal kingdom." The chough, here as often elsewhere (cp. note on I, I, 166), is the jackdaw (Fr. *choucas*, from an earlier *chouc*), one of the smallest of crows, a great chatterer and, twice in Sh., a type of foolishness, though easily tamed and taught to repeat certain words and sentences.

10. *In*, marking what his spaciousness lies, or consists, in.—*Spacious in the possession*, for "possessing an ample space", does sound a little like a first parody of the affected court jargon picked up by the "chough" in question (*V*). But its being ushered in by *as I say* (though referring, of course, to 87) and its leading up to *dirt* (which echoes V, I, 108) seem to make this doubtful.

11. *Sweet lord*, V, I, 83.

I should impart[1] a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit[2]. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head[3].

Osr. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent[4] cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks[5] it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion[6]—

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very[7] sultry, as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter—

Ham. I beseech you, remember[8]—

Hamlet moves him to put on his hat[9].

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith[10]. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe

1. *Impart*; cp. III, II, 313, and e. g. *signify* presently, l. 103.

2. *Diligence of spirit* is here a mockingly fine phrase; after which Osric has no sooner offered to open his mouth once more than Hamlet abruptly addresses him again.

3. *Bonnet*, then of wider application for head-gear than now.—*His*, I, I, 37.—*For the head*, even at meals and at church then (cp. p. 65 n. 3). A gentleman would remain uncovered "only at court and in the presence of royalty" (P. Macquoid, on *Costume*, in *Sh.'s England* vol. II).

4. *Indifferent*, III, I, 122; I, III, 116.

5. *Methinks*, p. 232 n. 8.

6. *Complexion*: bodily temperament, then supposed to result from the proportions in which the four humours were *combined*. Q^2 has a full stop (but so it will have e. g. after *matter*, 104); F prints "*for* my complexion." The dash, one of Warburton's emendations, implies that Hamlet, possibly after some gesture (cp. next stage-direction), as of one oppressed by heat, was going to add some such phrase as "deceives me," when Osric hastened to agree "exceedingly."

7. Cp. Polonius's "*Very* like a whale," III, II, 365.

8. *Remember*. For the complete phrase and its meaning (in whatever way this may be accounted for most satisfactorily), what better authority than "*fashion's own knight*" (*Love's Labour's Lost*, I, I, 179), Don Adriano de Armado, when he magnificently thus addressed the schoolmaster Holofernes (V, I, 103), "I do beseech thee, *remember thy courtesy*; I beseech thee, apparel thy head," i. e. put on thy hat again?

9. (*Hamlet... hat*); Johnson's direction, in which *moves him to* means, of course, indicates by a gesture that the wishes him to.

10. *Good my lord*, I, II, 169.—*For mine ease* (as regards "mine,"

me[1], an absolute gentleman, full of most excellen' differences[2], of very soft society and great showing[3]: indeed, to speak feelingly[4] of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry[5], for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see![6] 112

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you[7]; though, I know, to divide him inventorially

sleekly mincing here, cp. I, i, 58, n.), promptly emphasized by "in *good* faith," appears to have been a current phrase of extreme civility in such cases. In one of Florio's books of Italian and English dialogues, entitled *Second Fruits to be gathered of twelve Trees of diverse but delightsome Tastes to the Tongues of Italian and English men* (1591), one speaker is supposed politely to ask, "Why do you stand bareheaded? you do yourself wrong;" to which his interlocutor replies, "Pardon me, good sir, I do it *for my ease.*"

1. *Believe me.* The "chough" now carries out to the full (and even beyond) instructions from the "beast, lord of beasts" (88), of which we were told in IV, vii, 130. F. has here one of its short cuts, leaving out 107-36.

2. *Absolute,* free from imperfection of any kind.—*Excellent differences,* distinguishing qualities (cp. IV, v, 172) that are excellences; rather than different (i. e. various) excellences (Schmidt, II, p. 1417, c. 1).

3. *Soft,* a most "soft" substitute for some such more virile epithet as "gentle" (cp. end of n. 5). —*Showing,* for "appearance" (*which* need not be conscious), also characterizes the speaker more truly than the "*absolute gentleman*" that he is at such pains to depict.

4. *Feelingly,* with proper feeling, or sense, of his merits.

5. *The card or calendar* (the second word being probably suggested to "young Osric," and at once irresistibly recommended to him, by its alliterating with the first): "the card by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the calendar by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be at once excellent and seasonable" (Johnson, who probably took "card" to mean "mariner's card"; cp. 139 n.). *Card,* however, then frequently had the sense of map, here "chart," sea-chart; and *calendar,* meaning guide, directory, is recorded both in Chaucer and after him.—*Gentry*: cp. II, ii, 22.

6. *Shall,* III, i, 176.—*In him the continent of* = him to be the *continent* (cp. IV, iv, 64) of, to have in him.—*What* = whatever, an equivalence now limited to a few pronominal uses of the word.—*Part* continues the metaphor of the map, but is also the singular of *parts* p. 198 n. 5.—*Would see* (with emphatic "would"), would *desire* to see.

7. *Hamlet* now gives full play to his sense of the values, uses and misuses, of words and to his instinct, in consequence, for parody (cp. III, ii, 278-279; V, i, 212-215), and, with contemptuous gusto, "out-Osrics" Osric at his own inane affectations in vocabulary, phrase, and image.—*Definement,* given as French by Cotgrave (1611); but cp. e. g. *debatement,* 45. —*Perdition* = *partial* loss, diminution; a refinement in sense illustrated in *N. E. D.* from Sh.

would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail[1]. But, in the verity of extolment[2], I take him to be a soul of great article[3]: and his infusion, of such dearth[4] and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror[5] and who else would trace him, his umbrage[6], nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly[7] of him.

only.—*In you* = in (or *from*) what you say of him. For the causal value of *in*, cp. IV, v, 118; also " *in* one speech, " III, ii, 81.

1. *Memory*, striving to recall, one by one, and to compute all his excellences.—*Yet but* must be elliptic for " *yet* this effort (or memory, in this effort) at dividing him inventorially would (because it *could*: p. 32 n. 4) do nothing *but*. "—*Yaw* (said of a ship), stagger to right and left (in the swelling ocean his excellences), unable to steer straight.—*Neither*, emphasizing (II, ii, 308) the " nothing " *implied* in " *yet but*, " and thus equivalent to " nothing more, after all. "—*In respect of* = if one considers; i. e. on account of (*O*: rather, it seems, in comparison with.

2. *Quick sail* (or *sailing*: p. 6 n. 10) keeps up the nautical metaphor in *yaw* and figures the speed at which his excellences would outdistance the memory of the enumerator. Cp. what Prospero says of Miranda to Ferdinand (*Tempest*, IV, i, 10-11) :

" *Thou shalt find she will outstrip* (all praise
And make it halt behind her; "

where " halt " means the same as " limp, walk lamely. "—*In the verity of extolment* : in plain English, to speak the *truth* in *high praise* of him.

3. *Of great article* may mean, it seems, either, by a straining of one of the normal senses of " article " (matter specified), " of great *matter*, i. e. importance, "; or (in closer accord with l. 114-115), " of great item, " i. e. of a great *number of* items, if his " most excellent differences " are to be " inventorially " enumerated, " article " after " article. "

4. *His infusion* = the qualities infused in him by nature.—*Dearth* = high value.

5. *Diction*, another bit of affectation for " speech. "—*Semblable*, as an adjective, in the usual French sense, is still found at the end of the XVIIth century; and *N. E. D.* has a couple of instances (of the XVth and the XVIth) in which it plays the part, as here, of a substantive, after a possessive adjective. The phrase is, none the less, obviously chosen by Hamlet in mockery of young Osric's dizzying " dearth and rareness " of diction.—*His mirror*, himself only, when reflected in his mirror.

6. *Trace him* : follow in his track. —*Umbrage* : faint representation; a meaning (common in the XVIIth cent. *N. E. D.*) consequent on that of " shadow " (cp. some of the uses of " shade "), which, in fact, " trace " suggests here.

7. *Infallibly* : impeccably, faultlessly.

Ham. The concernancy[1], sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?[2]

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is it not possible to understand in another tongue[3]? You will do it, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman[4]?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his[5] golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant—

Ham. I[6] would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me[7]. Well, sir?

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

1. *Concernancy.* *N. E. D.*, which has no other instance of the word (and only one, of "*concernance*," dated 1644), hesitatingly interprets "*concernment*," apparently in the obsolete sense of "matter concerning" the gentleman. Cp. both what follows immediately and I. 128; but observe also that Osric fails to "understand" (126).

2. *More rawer* (II, i, 11 n.) = too too (p. 24 n. 6) raw, in the sense, most probably, of untutored, unskilled, as in such phrases as "a *raw* recruit." Taking it, in closer accord with "*wrap*" and "*breath*," to mean much the same as in "raw weather" (cp. e. g. in *Julius Caesar*, I, II, 100, "a raw and gusty day") is tempting to the imagination, but seems forced.—*Breath*; cp. *breathe*, II, i, 39.

3. The question (if, as seems most probable, *in* = on; Abbott § 160) means "cannot you (Horatio is encouraging Osric to trust to his wits) understand this language of your own election (vulgarly, choice) on another tongue?" To this explanation, first given by Moberly (Rugby ed. 1874), the chief alternatives (both of them inferior in direct pointedness) appear to be to make "*another*" mean either "a *plainer*" (language) or "another than the usual one, a *strange* one."

4. What does the mentioning of this gentleman by name import? To what purpose have you named him? "*Nomination*," in the sense of "mentioning by name," though not unexampled at the time, is, of course, intended here to be affectedly impressive.

5. *His*; here and at 185 (though not 187), printed 's by Q^2, as in F. at 185 (and III, ii, 246).

6. I, who prize knowledge.; p. 27 n. 9.

7. *Much approve me*: "commend" me much, recommend me much to approbation, considering how ignorant *you* are.

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with[1] him in excellence; but to know a man well, were to know himself[2].

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed[3].

Ham. What's his weapon? 145

Osr. Rapier and dagger[4].

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses[5]: against the which he has imponed, as I take it[6], six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so[7]: three of the carriages[8], in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive

1. *Compare with* = appear to compare myself to, seem to vie with.

2. *Himself*, apparently = oneself. "No man can judge another, because no man knows himself; for we censure others but as they disagree from that humour which we fancy laudable in ourselves, and commend others but for that wherein they seem to quadrate and consent (= accord) with us. So that in conclusion all is but that (p. 16, n. 11) we all condemn, self-love" (Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*; pub. 1643).—For the comma (Q²'s) cp., p. 230, n. 8.

3. *Laid on* accords with the prefix of *imputation* (rare in this favourable sense) more palpably than it would have done with *reputation*.—*Them*: people.—*Meed*, in the sense of merit, still in occasional use at the end of the century.—*He's unfellowed*, he has not his fellow, his equal.

4. *And dagger* (cp. l. 150, where each rapier is accompanied by its *poniard*). Nimble as the rapier was, in comparison with its more sturdy English predecessors, it was still too heavy for quick parries; and these, in consequence, were made with a dagger, held in the left hand. Rapier and dagger were thus associated as sword and buckler had been.

5. *Barbary horses* (said to have been imported from the Barbary States, on the North-West coast of Africa), more familiarly "barbs," were small, but renowned both for swiftness and for ability to make a long career.

6. *Against the which*, I, i, 90.—*Imponed*, usually interpreted as an affected softening of "*impawned*," the Quarto word.—*Take it*, have been told and accept as true, or understand.

7. *Assigns*: appurtenances (*N. E. D.* has no other instance).—*As* (introducing examples), such as.—*Girdle*, belt.—*Hangers*, graduated loops by which the sword *hung* from the "girdle."—*And so*: and so forth.

8. *Carriages*; a use of the word so exceptional as not to have been met with elsewhere.

to the hilts[1], most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit[2].

Ham. What call you the carriages? 15

Hor. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane[4] to the matter, if we could carry cannon[5] by our sides : I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal[6]-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed, as you call it? 16

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid[7], sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits[8] : he hath laid on twelve for nine[9]; and i

1. *Fancy*, fashionably exquisite taste (cp. I, III, 71).—*Very responsive to* = in a taste that very well *corresponds* to, accords very well with, that of.

2. *Liberal conceit* = gentlemanlike, tastefully refined (and, in the sense of I, III, 74, *generous*), design.

3. *Must*, would have, would demand, to.—*The margent* (a then not uncommon form of "*margin*"), the usual place for glosses then (as it still is, in current editions of the English Bible, for references to similar passages, alternative interpretations and, occasionally, complementary indications).

4. *Germane*, closely akin, nearly related, pertinent; Q[1] has "*cousin german.*"

5. *Cannon*, the supports for which (*affûts* in French) *are* called carriages.

6. *Liberal*, I, III, 116.

7. *Laid*, staked, wagered.

8. *Shall*, here again the auxiliary of emphatic affirmation bearing on the future.—*Not exceed you three hits*, i. e. apparently not hit you more than seven times in the course of the twelve passes (or bouts), each terminated by a hit. But Laertes, otherwise, would "exceed" Hamlet by four hits, not three. Cp. next note.

9. *Twelve for nine* has exercised even more, and with no generally accepted result, the ingenuity of commentators. It has even been proposed, in consequence, (Herford) to loosen the arithmetical knot by taking the "dozen" of l. 166 to mean, not strictly 11 + 1, but some larger and more amenable number, e. g. 21 (which, since 12 — 9 = 3, would enable Hamlet to win for the king by making *more* than 9 hits against 12 of Laertes'). There fortunately seems to be no great harm in repeating, after Johnson, "it is sufficient that there was a wager."

would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer[1]. 170

Ham.[2] How if I answer 'no'?

Ors. I mean, my lord, the opposition[3] of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time[4] of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing[5], and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him and[6] I can: if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits[7].

Osr. Shall I redeliver you e'en so[8]? 180

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will[9].

Osr. I commend my duty to[10] your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for his turn[11]. 186

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head[12].

1. *Vouchsafe the answer* = condescend to accept the challenge.

2. *Hamlet*, pretending to understand *answer* in its most literal sense (cp. e. g. III, II, 93-5).

3. *Opposition*, not found used precisely in this way elsewhere, though the word occurs in the sense of "combat," and not in Sh. only. Cp. 61-2.

4. *The breathing time*, the time for exercise that will stimulate the organs of breathing, recreatively.

5. *Willing*, before which "be" is understood from what immediately precedes.

6. *And*, I, v, 176.

7. *I will gain* (clipped down by F. to *Ile*, i. e. I'll, *gain*). The auxiliary, besides being, as Abbott observed (§ 319), quite naturally repeated, with humorous modesty, from *I will win*, has the advantage of not evoking (like "*shall*" in l. 209 for instance), an idea of certainty.—*The odd hits*, i. e. the hits that I shall have received "into the bargain" (Schmidt), "over and above" (*O.*).

8. *Redeliver*: deliver (which Q^2 has simply, i. e. report) back to the king.—*E'en so*, I, I, 108.

9. *Effect*, 37—*After*, shaping the expression conformably to.

10. *Commend... to*, recommend to the kindly remembrance of; *commend*, in the sense of "praise."

11. *For his*, to serve his need in the matter.

12. The allusion is to a supposed, and then proverbial, habit of young lapwings, in such lively haste to come out of the shell that they would run off, with part of it still

Ham. He did[1] comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy[2] that I know the drossy[3] age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter[4]; a kind of yesty collection[5], which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed[6] opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out[7].

Enter a Lord[8].

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him[9] to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you

on their heads. Horatio's essential meaning is that "young Osric" (l. 197), a barely hatched courtier, is in restless haste to give himself the airs of a finished one. The comparison may, however, have been assisted by the full-grown bird's reputation for deceitfulness; also, perhaps, by the rather showy effect of its slender crest.

1. *Did*, gently and playfully emphatic. He surely did use, he must have used, ceremonious ways (for *comply* see p. 89, n. 5).

2. *Bevy* (F), was then used of a brood (Q[2]'s *breed* could mean this too), or of a flock, of game birds of the same species. It may have been suggested by 187.

3. *Drossy*, full of dross, scum, worthless matter; here, frivolous (Schmidt and *O.*); because scum floats on the surface? Cp. n. 5.

4. *Tune* need not, at that date, imply much more definitely musical quality than "*tone*".—*The time*, this time, these times, III, II, 25.—*Habit of encounter* = bearing, manner, in meeting and addressing another person.

5. *Yesty*, frothy, light and superficial.—*Collection*, which has sometimes been understood as in IV, v, 9, appears to mean much rather phrases and manners ("the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter") picked up here and there, "collected," i. e. gathered, from this man and that man.

6. *Fond and winnowed*. See Appendix *L*.

7. *The bubbles are out*; they, being mere bubbles, burst, go "out," as one says of a light for instance.

8. *Enter a Lord* only in Q[2] and the quartos that follow it. The folios, once again more economical both of personnel (cp. Introd. p. XX, n. 1 and 2) and of time, leave out 196-206, no doubt as adding nothing of material importance. Claudius's parade of insistent considerateness does not awaken mistrust in Hamlet, who still shows himself as "free" from all suspicion of treacherous "contrivance" as the action of the play requires. Nor was the "desire" conveyed in 206-7 necessary to confirm the resolve already expressed in 75-78. Few attentive readers will fail to find some interest in the passage; none, however, will be surprised at its excision for practical motives.

9. *Commended*, as in l. 182.—*Him* = himself; cp. e. g. p. 23 n. 2.

attend[1] him in the hall : he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play[2] with Laertes, or that you will take longer time[3].

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure[4] : if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever[5], provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy[6] time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to[7] play.

Ham. She well[8] instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so : since he went into[9] France, I have been in continual practice[10]; I shall win at the odds[11]. But thou wouldst not think how ill all is here about my heart : but it is no matter[12].

Hor. Nay[13], good my lord[14],—

1. *Brings*; for the tense compare p. 29 n. 12.—*Attend* (cp. the shortened form. "*tend*," I, III, 83) = wait for.

2. *Hold*, subjunctive, once usual after "*if*," (even when expressing no real uncertainty; cp, p. 20 n. 7).—*Play*, IV, VII, 105.

3. *That*, p. 197 n. 13.—*Take longer time* : take a longer time, put it off.

4. *Pleasure*, a word that, by recalling III, III, 89-90, has confirmed some commentators in a suspicion that the possibility of a deadly meaning underlay, in Hamlet's mind, the irreproachable correctness, ceremoniousness almost, of speech (cp. p. 245 n. 2).

5. *Whensoever* it be (or may be).

6. *Happy*, propitious.

7. *Entertainment* = form of greeting, as in II, II, 372.—*Fall to*, cp. II, I, 89.

8. *Well*, emphasized (cp. p. 233 n. 11) by being placed before the verb.

9. *Into*, V, I, 149.

10. *Continual practice* may surprise the reader, after Hamlet's own declaration in II, II, 294-295, which Sh. had certainly not intended for an untruth(as foolishly transparent, indeed, as it would have been degrading). But that Laertes' antagonist should be in perfect training, was desirable to heighten the interest *now*; Sh. accordingly here made him so, forgetting, no doubt (as who, in the audience, would not forget?) the brief statement to the contrary that *had* harmonized with the mood and theme of another speech, so far back in the play.

11. *At the odds*, with the advantage given me.

12. *All is*, clipped into *all's* by Q^2—*But... matter*, V, I, 291.

13. *Nay*, explained by 217-8.

14. Full stop in original editions; cp. 100.

Ham. It is but foolery; but[1] it is such a kind of gain-giving[2], as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestal their repair[3] hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we[4] defy augury: there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.[5] If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now[6]; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all[7]; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is it to leave betimes?[8] Let be[9]. 224

1. *But*, the fourth " *but* " in so many lines; which may betray some haste on the writer's part.

2. *Gaingiving* (= misgiving) belongs to a group of compounds of which " gainsay " (i. e. contradict) alone survives.

3. *Repair*, p. 6 n. 10.

4. *We* (humorously), " *Hamlet, the Dane*; " cp. p. 223, n. 3.

5. *Special*, Q^2; cp. p. 221 n. 2.—*Providence... sparrow.* " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father " (*Gospel according to St. Matthew*, X, 29). The allusion assists in giving to the sentiment a character more definitely Christian than might be affirmed, strictly, of 10-11.

6. *If it be not to come, it will be now*, is, in strict logic, superfluous; but such balanced transpositions of words have been to the taste of wiser men than he of the " fondly foolish figure " (II, II, 98).

7. *The readiness is all.* Critics on the look out for traces of the influence on Sh. of Montaigne's *Essays* have noted the identity of the sentiment expressed by Hamlet here and of the central theme of ch. XIX (" *Que philosopher c'est apprendre à mourir.* ") " *Il est incertain où la mort nous attende : attendons-la partout.* " Identity, or significant resemblance, of striking phrase (such as, in § 7, " *Il faut estre tousjours botté et prest à partir* " = " ready booted to take his journey, " in Florio's translation, 1603) on the other hand, there is none.—Cp. *J. Cæsar*, II, II, 36-7.

8. *Has* (F.), emphatic and thus equivalent to " really has, possesses as *not* to be taken from him. " The reading in Q^2 is " *no man of ought he leaves, knows,* " which some commentators have preferred, inserting a comma after " man " (cp. end of n. 8 p. 230) construing " of ought he leaves " as the object of " knows, " and understanding : " knows anything of what happiness or misery the life he leaves would have meant for him. " But the inversion is harsh; and the folio text expresses much the same thought, more naturally and more nervously at once. — *Betimes*; cp. p. 181 n. 4.

9. *Let it be* (338) as it is; " it is no matter " (p. 243, n. 12) again.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES *and* Lords, *with other* Attendants *with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it*[1].

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.
[*The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.*
Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong;
But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows[2],
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd[3]
With sore[4] distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness[5].
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be taken away[6],
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness: if it be[7] so,

1. *On it,* presently (267).—The whole stage-direction is F's. Q^2 mentions also (cp. p. 206 n. 7), besides *drums, trumpets,* and a *cushion, daggers* (in accordance with 146, but the use of which, p. 239 n. 4, would have made the *scuffling* described in n. 2 p. 250 impossible).

2. *Presence* = noble, most noble, company. The ceremonious (cp. p. 247 n. 6) solemnity of manner adds weight to every syllable of the line (cp. 240).

3. *Punish'd*: afflicted, with the implication that the affliction is a punishment from Heaven; cp. III, IV, 174-5.

4. *Sore,* grievous.

5. *Nature* (cp. 244) as in I, II, 5, and V, 81. — *Exception*: objection (as in the still surviving phrase "to take exception") in consequence of such feelings. — *Roughly awake,* arouse by its roughness. — *Madness.* A Lubbock, Jackson, for instance, thought, and wished that Hamlet "had made some other defence." But *could* he? (Prof. Bradley). And *is* it altogether an untruth? May not his treatment of Ophelia, whom he "loved" (V, I, 270), of her father even (cp. III, IV, 172-173), as of Laertes himself (cp. "I forgot myself" in l. 76, and presently l. 234), now seem to him to deserve the name of "madness" in the larger sense of the word?

6. *Be,* p. 20, n. 7.—*Taken,* flattened down by F. to *tane,* not unknown to early editions in general, but which (even modernised into *ta'en*) who would now care to adopt?

7. *'t* (Q^2,F); cp. n. 7, p. 161.

Hamlet is of the faction[1] that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil[2]
Free[3] me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That[4] I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in[5] nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour[6]
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement[7],
Till by some elder masters of known honour[8]
I have a voice and precedent of peace[9],
To keep my name ungor'd[10]. But, till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely[11],
And will this brother's wager frankly play[12].

1. *Faction* = party, without implication of blame.

2. *Disclaiming from* (which Cotgrave gives for "*desadvouëment*) = disavowal of.—*A purpos'd evil*: any purpose of doing harm.

3. *Free* = absolve, clear from blame; cp. the use of the adjective in II, II, 562, and III, II, 229.

4. *That*: as to think that.

5. *In*: as regards.

6. *In*, 244.—*My terms of honour*; periphrastic with elaborate formality. In *The Merry Wives*, "*the terms of my honour*" (II, II, 22) is considered by Schmidt as = what concerns my honour; and this may also be the meaning here, though "the conditions set by my honour" would be suggested by modern usage.

7. *Stand aloof*, hold back:—*Will* = will have.—*Reconcilement* (cp. *debatement*, 45) = reconciliation.

8. *Elder masters*, : men *older* (III, III, 37) than myself and recognised authorities in these matters.—*Honour*. As regards the repetition, one may perhaps compare "*but*" l. 212-5, though the echoing and slightly hollow sound-effect might be worth reiterating.

9. *A voice... peace*: an expression of opinion, based on some precedent, that will justify me in accepting reconciliation.

10. *My name ungor'd*: my reputation unwounded (cp. I. 344), uninjured. To "*gore*" still meant to wound by piercing, *in any* manner.

11. *It*, the love with which love is "*received*," 251.—*Freely*: = willingly, gladly.

12. *Frankly play* = not merely "*ouer franc*," (which should go without saying, in any case), but with an unpreoccupied mind; free (IV, VII, 135) from unbrotherly feeling.

Give us the foils. Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil[1], Laertes : in mine ignorance
Your skill shall[2], like a star in the darkest night,
Stick fiery off[3] indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No[4], by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin[5] Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds[6] on the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it: I have seen you both :
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another[7].

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?[8] [*They prepare to play.*

1. *I*, slightly stressed;—*Foil* (here, = French "*feuille*," in the sense of leaf of metal in which a gem is set and that adds to its brilliancy by contrast). Hamlet, in court-goudy playful comment on Laertes' request, puns on the word, in approved Elizabethan fashion.

2. *Shall*, III, I, 176.

3. *Stick fiery* (cp. I, III, 116) *off* = stand out, be set off, in fiery brilliancy, "*like a star,*" which "is fire," II, II, 116.

4. *No*, not *you*, but, a little, such "almost Chinese" politeness (Clutton Brock) as that of 255-7.

5. *Cousin*, I, II, 64.

6. *Your grace.* Never before had Hamlet addressed Claudius with such ceremonious reverence of phrase.—*The odds* has been (in accordance with the usual sense of the phrase "to lay odds") understood, by *Clar.* and others, to mean the *disparity between the stakes*, the king's being apparently far heavier than Laertes'. But, if one may judge back from line 233 (and why should Claudius misunderstand or pretend to do so?), the odds here also should be *the points* given to Hamlet *in advance*; and "on the weaker side" (in any case, another declaration of inferiority) would mean, as the king's answer again seems to imply, "on the side that, I fear, will prove the weaker, *even thus*".

7. This must be the "*little shuffling*" foreseen by Claudius (IV, VII, 137-138). How the fact that one foil was "unbated" can have escaped Osric (innocent, it seems, l. 305, of any knowledge of "foul practice,") is not explained in the text, Sh. most likely counting on the excitement and good will of his audience to make it pass unquestioned. The "anointing" (IV, VII, 140) Laertes apparently does so swiftly and cunningly as not to attract notice, while "*preparing to play.*"

8. *Likes* = pleases, as very fre-

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups[1] of wine upon that table
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange[2],
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath[3];
And in the cup an union[4] shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the[5] cups;
And let the kettle[6] to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth[7],
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play*[8].

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgement.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable[9] hit.

Laer. Well; again.

King. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine[10];

quently then.—*A* = one, as in phrases still current.

1. *Stoups*, the "*flagons*" of, p. 245, l. 3, also (according to *Clar.*) the "*cups*" of 274.

2. Or repay (cp. I. 68) his opponent, by making the return hit in the third exchange of passes.

3. *Better breath*; cp. 287 and p. 249 n. 7.

4. *The cup* of Hamlet, who, in his turn, shall drink then, in acknowledgement of the king's pledge.—*An union*, a fine, large pearl; strictly, one supposed to be "unique."

5. *The* two.

6. *Kettle*: kettledrum, I, IV. 11.

7. Cp. I, II, 125-8; noting, here, the symmetrical opposition of singulars and plurals.

8. *They play.* Laertes, a little remissly (296) for *him*; but both, with trained skill enough to satisfy spectators *technically* as well as dramatically interested (cp. 301).

9. *Palpable*, in the still usual sense of "evident"—Lines 280-1, though now generally printed and numbered as verse would be, are (as early editions make them) most naturally, prose. Cp. p. 57 n. 7.

10. *This pearl is thine* (dropping

Here's to thy health.

[*Kettledrums and trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*]

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you?
Laer. A touch, a touch[1], I do confess.
King. Our son shall win.
Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath[2].
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin[3], rub thy brows:
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
Ham. Good madam[4]!
King. Gertrude, do not drink.
Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.
King. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.
Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.
Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.
Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.
King. I do not think it.
Laer. [*Aside*] And yet it is almost[5] against my conscience.
Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally[6];
I pray you, pass with your best[7] violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me[8].
Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*
Osr. Nothing, either way.

poison into the cup intended for Hamlet).

1. *Touch*, slight hit.

2. *Fat and scant of breath.* See Appendix *M*.

3. *Napkin* = handkerchief, as always in Sh. and often then.

4. *Good*, meaning "I thank you for your goodness": cp. II, i. 69. —*Madam*, courteously formal (I, ii. 120).

5. *Almost*, accented (as ,when it emphatically means *not* quite, it still is) on the second.

6. *Dally*, trifle.

7. *Best*, in analogous phrases (such as "best haste") practically means "greatest," but, here, may imply skill (cp. *better*, 271).

8. *Afeard* (then current) = afraid. —*Make a wanton of me* = treat me like a spoilt child (a not uncommon meaning of *wanton* then), whom one allows to have his way.

Laer. Have at you now[1]!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers*[2], *and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*

King. Part them; they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls.*

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed[3] on both sides. How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is it, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric[4];
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery[5].

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swounds[6] to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies.*

Ham. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

Laer. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;

1. *Have at you* = (I shall) attack you.

2. *In scuffling, they change rapiers* How, only experts with sufficient knowledge of XVIth century practice may venture to suggest. Attention has, however, been called to pages illustrating the manner in which "*A prinse* (= prise) *faut faire con'reprinse*" (i. e. when your opponent has caught hold of the hilt of your sword and is going to wrench it from you, you must do the same to him, so that you just "*change*" weapons) in the *Traicté sur l'Espee seule, Mère de toutes les Armes*, composed by "Henry de Sainct Didier, Gentilhomme Provençal" and dedicated "à la Majesté très Chrestienne de Charles Neuvième" (Paris, 1573). The direction in Q[1] is "They catch each other's rapiers;" and possibly the "scuffling" of F. means little more than struggling to do this.

3. *Bleed*, as, by some artifice, the audience probably had the illusion of *seeing* they did (W. J. Lawrence).

4. A *woodcock*, when used to attract other birds into a *springe*, will sometimes foolishly (cp. I, III. 115 and note) strut so near the snare as to be itself caught in it.

5. *With mine own treachery*: by means of my own "foul practice" (317) and "treacherous instrument" (316).

6. *Swounds* (both Q[2] and F. print *sounds*) = swoons.

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd : the foul practice[1]
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again : thy mother's poison'd :
I can[2] no more : the king, the king's to blame.
Ham. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work. [*Stabs the King.*
All. Treason! treason[3]!
King. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt[4].
Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane[5],
Drink off this potion[6]. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother[7]. [*King dies.*
Laer. He is justly serv'd;
It is a poison temper'd[8] by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet :
Mine and my father's death come[9] not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! [*Dies*[10].
Ham. Heaven make thee free of it[11]! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu[12]!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance[13],

1. *Practice*, IV, VII, 67.
2. *Can* do, or say; cp. IV, VII, 84.
3. *All*, unanimously; counting for as little (cp. 334-5) as when the King had risen, in such "marvellous distemper," at the play; p. 133 n. 3. Sh. obviously had his hands more than full (cp. end of n. 3 p. 224), without troubling to make the courtiers of a Claudius more than just "walking gentlemen."—*Treason*, p. 185 n. 7.
4. *King*, tenacious of *this* life beyond all hope.—*Yet*, I, III, 55.
5. *Dane*, I, I, 15.
6. *This potion*; forcing as much as he can (whence *off*; but see 341) of what was left in the cup down the throat of the fiercely struggling Claudius.
7. *Follow my mother*, so that your *union* shall not be broken.
8. *Temper'd* = prepared by mixing, conformably to rules.
9. *Come* (optative, cp. e. g. III, II, 204 ff.) in divine punishment.
10. *Dies* before Hamlet, though wounded after him. Dramatic justice (cp. 307; 327-8) and poetic fitness both made it desirable that, of all the victims, the hero should speak last (as well as, with the assistance of stage conventions, at some length).
11. *Free*, II, II, 545; *of* = from.
12. A pathetic *adieu*, but brief; and there surely is something other than unmixed pity in *wretched*. Cp. *e. g.* p. 25 n. 3.
13. *Chance* = mischance.

That are but mutes or audience to this act[1], 335
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest[2]—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied[3].

Hor. Never believe it : 340
I am more an antique Roman[4] than a Dane :
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou art[5] a man,
Give me the cup : let go; by heaven, I'll have it.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, 346
Absent thee from felicity[6] awhile,

1. *Mutes*, the "*mutae personae*" of Latin lists of characters in plays (cp. p. 125 n. 6).—"*Audience*" keeps up, and "*act*" (cp. III, II, 73) does not contradict, the comparison with a theatrical performance. A less robust, or more sophisticated, art would rather have avoided it (cp. *e. g.* p. 57 n. 7).

2. *As*, introducing the (only too palpable) truth that disproves the supposition just glanced at.—*Sergeant*, "*dread sergeant of th' eternal Judge*" (*Bartas his Divine Week and Works*, translated by Josuah Sylvester; end of the *Third Day of the First Week*, where du Bartas had said merely "*la mort redoutée.*") "Sergeant" was the name of the officer that arrested offenders in order to secure their appearance before a judge.—*Arrest*,

"*that fell arrest*
Without all bail"

(*Sonnet LXXIV*) i. e. without any possibility of release by finding security (Fr. *caution*) for appearance before the judge later.

3. *The unsatisfied*, those whose opinion remains in suspense, "*things standing thus unknown*" (344).

4. *Antique*, p. 95 n. 12.—*Roman*. The practice of "self-slaughter" (I, II, 132) as legitimate, when life no longer held out anything worth living for, would strike Sh. as characteristic of ancient Rome. In *Julius Caesar*, V, III, 89, Titinius, on the point of killing himself, after a brief "*By your leave, gods*" (contrast the Hamlet of I, II, 131-2), had said "*This is a Roman's part*;" and for the doomed Macbeth, "*playing the Roman fool*" (V, VIII, 1) means "dying on one's own sword," as Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, for instance, had done, to escape capture.

5. *As* (emphasizing the order that follows), obey me *as truly as*.—*Thou art*; "th'art" (cp. "y'are" F. II, II, 367; "thar" Q², IV, VII, 11) both in Q² and F¹, which, at le st, thus lay the emphasis more logically than the modern compromise "*thou'rt.*" Cp. p. 1 n. 1.

6. *Felicity* in heaven; cp. 360.

And in this harsh world[1] draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. [*March afar off, and shot within.*
What warlike noise[2] is this?
Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.
Ham. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit[3]:
I cannot live to hear the news from England[4];
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras[5]: he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less[6],
Which have solicited[7]. The rest is silence[8]. [*Dies.*
Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest[9]!

1. *This harsh world*, in which, however, the Prince of Denmark (cp. 397-8) and *hero* of the play shows active interest (355) to the last.

2. *Noise*; as little depreciatory as *e. g.* in Psalm C (version of 1611) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." *Warlike noise* = "the soldiers' *music*," 399.

3. *O'ercrows*, as a fighting-cock would a conquered adversary.— *Spirit* = breath, vital energy.

4. To be interpreted by the steady light of 57-58.

5. *On Fortinbras*; cp. 389.

6. *Occurrents* = occurrences, as not uncommonly then.—*More and less* = both the more and the less important; great and small.

7. *Solicited* = urged, incited, me to swerve from what seemed the straight path and the right.

8. *Silence.* How mechanically some Jacobean players could act, F. unconsciously illustrates by following up the word with stage death-groans (p. xx. n. 10).

9. *Angels*; cp. "*Occurrite, Angeli Domini, suscipientes animam ejus*" (Roman Catholic prayer after a death). — *Rest*, "*requiem æternam*" (Rom. Cath. burial service). — On the modern stage, this line is generally made to provide the climax upon which the curtain should come down. But not only had the Elizabethan front-stage, or stage proper, no curtain behind which both the living and the dead should leave it at once; an Elizabethan audience (apart from its appreciation of soldiers, their "*music*" and "*the rites of war*" paid to a dead Prince) would expect some indication of how things were going to settle down. For various reasons, in fact, both material and mental, the Shakespearean (and generally the Elizabethan) practice, in tragedy, as critics have pointed out, was to lessen the emotional tension at the

Why[1] does the drum come hither? [*March with in.*

Enter FORTINBRAS *and the* English Ambassadors, *with drum, colours, and* Attendants.

Fort. Where is this sight[2]?
Hor. What is it you would see?
If aught of[3] woe or wonder, cease your search.
Fort. This quarry cries on havoc[4]. O proud[5] death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell[6],
That thou so many princes at a shot[7]
So bloodily hast struck?
First Amb. The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:

close by showing life and thought resuming their more usual course. In this connection, one may note that the speech of young Fortinbras at sight of all these dead (364-367) will be the last flight of poetic imagination in the play.

1. *Why.* From the first words of Fortinbras the reason will appear to be that the news of what has happened had reached him at once.

2. *This sight* = that sight which, I have *just* been told, awaits me here.

3. *Aught of*, any subject of.

4. *Quarry* = technically, game (properly deer, noble beasts of the chase) whose bodies formed the final sight at a hunt; hence, in Sh. and other Elizabethans, bodies of slaughtered men lying together. —*Cries on havoc*, in all likelihood, a (slightly more emphatic) variation on the then common phrase *to cry havoc*, meaning to give the signal for merciless slaughter; as Antony foretells that the spirit of Caesar will do, in the tragedy that had preceded *Hamlet* (*J. C.* III, 1, 273); cp. p. 255 n. 4. " Proclaims, denounces, merciless slaughter, " an explanation sometimes given and neither impossible in itself nor, certainly, contradicted by what immediately follows, would make Fortinbras express, however vigorously, the obvious, instead of thinking, characteristically, of action at once.

5. *Proud*, laying the highest low and making them thy spoils. Cp. *King John*, IV, III, 35, where Pembroke, seeing the body of Arthur, exclaims :

O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty.

6. *Feast*, banquet.—*Toward*, I, 77.—*Cell*, place of close confinement.

7. *Princes*, persons of the highest, or very high, rank (the word is used of the revolted nobles at the end of *King John*), of either sex.—*A*, p. 247 n, 8.

Where should we have our thanks?
Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life[1] to thank you :
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question[2],
You from the Polack[3] wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view[4];
And let me speak[5] to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about : so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts[6],
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters[7],
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause[8],
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook[9]
Fallen on the inventors' heads : all this[10] can I
Truly deliver.
Fort Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience[11].
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :

1. *Of life*, that life gives.
2. *Jump* (which even F gives here), I, i, 65.—*Question*, matter that raises questions.
3. *Polack*; (substantive e. g. in II, ii, 63) = Polish.
4. *To the view* = in the public view, much as Caesar's was, to the same purpose, in the memorable scene II, act III, of Sh.'s first Roman tragedy.
5. *Speak* more expressive, and more suggestive of an impressed audience, than " say. "
6. The incest and the fratricide,
7. The death of Polonius was both *casual* (III, iv, 32) and a *judgement* (*ibid.* 174-5). The plural is apparently rhetorical, in accord too with those that precede and follow.
8. *Deaths*; those of Rosencrantz and his *alter ego*.—*Put on* = urged, instigated (often used of evil deeds). —*Forc'd cause*, understood by the mid-XIX^th^ cent. German scholar Delius apologetically; Hamlet was " forced to contrive " these deaths to save his own life. Might not the allusion be rather to the forgery? In which case " forc'd " would mean " distorted, falsified, " much as, in *A Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 41, " forced thoughts " are thoughts perversely made to deviate from the truth.
9. *Upshot* (originally, final shot in an archery match), conclusion.—*Mistook* (= mistaken; cp. p. 63 n. 11) : which were mistakes, since they miscarried.
10. A tragical bill of fare, every item in which may well be pre-Shakespearean. Cp. p. 203 n. 8.
11. *Audience* (trisyllabic), as, probably, in I, 240) = hearing.

I have some right of memory[1] in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage[2] doth invite me.
Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose[3] voice will draw on more :
But let this same be presently perform'd[4],
Ev'n while men's minds are wild[5]; lest more mischance
On[6] plots and errors happen.
Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier[7], to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on[8],
To have prov'd most royally : and, for his passage[9],
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak[10] loudly for him.
Take up the bodies : such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much[11] amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.[12]

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*]

1. *Of memory* = remembered, as 355-356 implied.

2. *Vantage* (short for "advantage"; cp. III, III, 33) = opportunity.

3. *His mouth whose*, the mouth of him whose.—*Voice*, 356.—*More* voices.

4. *This same* (accompanied by some explanatory gesture, as the same phrase was in III, IV, 172, and "*yond same*" in I, I, 36) = what I have been speaking of, which refers to the sight here; cp. p. 254 n. 2.—*Presently*, II, II, 171.

5. *Ev'n*, I, I, 81.—*Wild*, violently agitated, and by opinions that are wild, i. e. not ruled by knowledge of what "I can truly deliver."

6. *On* = consequent on.

7. *Like a soldier*. That martial honours were rendered to the hero at the end of the old *Hamlet*, is most likely.—Nor could the sight and the sound of them here be other than welcome to the audience. But, though undue stress should not be laid on a couple of lines of funeral praise, at the close of a long and psychologically complex tragedy, or on this form of homage from a warlike prince at the head of his army, they still count among the reasons for examining how far even the Hamlet of *this* play has shown himself (in a phrase of Hazlitt's that might be Coleridge's) a mere "prince of philosophical speculators".

8. *Put on* his trial as king; cp. IV, VII, 130.

9. *Prov'd*, here followed (on the authority of F, which makes the scansion regular; cp. e, g. p. 231 n. 2), by the adverb, not the adjective (as in Q^2); cp. *faire ses preuves*. — *Passage*, III, III, 86.

10. *Speak*, imperative.

11. *Much* = greatly; cp. IV, VII, 10.

12. Metrically, cp. p. 192 n. 5.

APPENDIX A

Act I. sc. I, *l.* 63. — All the quartos have « pollax »; the folios (in which common nouns with initial capitals abound: e. g. " Ice " in this very line; cp. Introd. p. XII n. 3) print " Pollax " (1623 and 1632), " Pollax " (1663), and finally, in the erroneous spelling that has prevailed, " Poleaxe " (1685). Hamlet's father, in violent discussion with some enemy, had apparently struck his heavy pole-axe (a formidable *short*-handled weapon) fiercely on the ice. "*Sledded*", according to Mr. Onions' *Glossary* (1911 ed.), it would not be impossible to interpret as " like a sled " i. e. a sledge-hammer.—While *N. E. D.* however (vol. dated 1919) has an instance of " *sled* " in this sense, in early XVIIth century verse, it records no such use of " sledded. " " *The* " also is a difficulty, since it seems to point to this arm as characteristic of the Danes (or, at least, of the people of that part of Europe); which there is no reason for thinking. Nor (startling as a similar lack of self-control might prove in XXth century Europe) would it have attracted such notice as to be long remembered, some commentators have argued, in the Denmark of the elder Hamlet.

Malone (at the end of the XVIIIth century), accordingly proposed the emendation " *Polacks,* " the plural of the once not uncommon " Polack "=Pole (e. g. II, II, 75); and the Denmark of the play would naturally enough have matter for " angry parles, " and worse, with Poland (cp. note on *Polonius* in *Dramatis Personae*; also, the beginning of IV, IV). But who would " the Poles " be? If the Polish *army* is meant, how could fierce blows be dealt to it " *in* " a conference? The singular, " *Polack* " (Pope's conjecture), on the other hand, would make " the Dane " (as in l. 15) smite the Polish *King* in the course of " an angry parle; " which would be sufficiently in accord with the barbarous times

suggested. It would also render the parallelism with 61 all (perhaps, for a text of *that* age, not Pope's, mor than all) that might be wished. Only reasoning based o textual evidence, however, could make this solution mor than plausible.

With "*Polack*," "*sledded*" would, quite naturally mean "who rode in a sled" (=sledge); with the plural "who rode (or generally ride) in sledges."

APPENDIX B

Act I, sc. III, 81. — Warburton (1747), who became bishop, pronounced the maxims here delivered by Laertes father to be "fine lessons of social life;" and, if admiration for most of them has generally been tempered by thei prudential character, "*to thine own self be true,*" touching enough on a father's lips, rises by itself much higher (unless as Sir E. K. Chambers suggested, it should mean only tha "honesty is the best policy"). As regards style too, compar ison with analogous gnomic passages, of Lily for example only enhances appreciation of l. 59-80. Are we to conclud from all this that, foolish as the Lord Chamberlain wil presently, and "plentifully" (p. 80 l. 5), show himself, h is here *all* wisdom and good taste?

Shuffle up some of these maxims, M. Jusserand archly remarks (*Hist. Lit. Angl.* II, p. 276 n.), with the counsel given, in *All's well that ends well* (I, 1), by the Countess o Roussillon to her son Bertram, leaving for Paris also; and what reader, not in the secret, will always tell which is which? It remains, however, that *she* speaks far more briefly (cp. note on "few," l. 68), directly from the soul — a soul of unspeakably finer quality—while Polonius is, in comparison, ponderous, lengthy, earthy, with an occasional flourish of dubious value ("*as the night the day,*" l. 79; Warburton, in whose revised version of Pope's edition, the title-page tells us, "the genuine text is settled," unhesi tatingly straightened the logic by substituting "*light*" for "night"). Does not *he*, whether consciously or not, recite rather than speak?

APPENDIX C

Act I, sc. IV. *l. 9.* "*Upspring*"=upstart (actually substituted for it, here, by Pope), in a passage of Elizabethan prose quoted by *N. E. D.*, which admits the *possibility* of the same meaning here (Claudius being looked upon by Hamlet as a "rank" *parvenu* king; e. g. sc. II, 139-140, 152-153, II, II, 360-361). In this case, the word would be the subject of "*reels*" (=revels).

Mr. Onions, in his *Glossary* (1911 ed.), gave the latter equivalence (not recorded out of Sh., and supported by a single passage of *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, VII, 101, where Schmidt had accounted for the contraction by Enobarbus' need of rhyming the word to "*wheels*"), but took "reels" to be a plural *noun*, the second element of one compound substantive ("upspring-reels"): *the whole line being governed by* "*keeps.*" "*Upspring*", he admitted to be an English rendering of the German "*Hüpfauf*" ("*hupfen*" = to hop or bound + "*auf*" = up), the last and wildest dance at German merrymakings then, as pointed out by Elze (1867), in a note to the *Tragedy of Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*, III, I. The "*Almain*" (O. Fr. *alemane* = *allemande*) and the "*upspring*" are there said to be the only German dances:

So dance the princes, burghers, and the boors.

Others, with Furness and Mr. Verity for instance, see in "*reels*" simply the current *verb* of this form, but used *transitively* (=staggers drunkenly through: cp. "to *reel the streets* at noon," *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, IV, 20; "a use peculiar to Sh." *O.*), governing "the swaggering upspring" and picturesquely emphasized by coming last. This seems to give to the line most ease and vigour of swing.

APPENDIX D

Act I, sc. V, *l. 172.* In Saxo's story (as in Belleforest's), where Amleth's father was murdered openly and no ghost appeared, the feigned madness was (even apart from the

Roman precedent of Lucius Junius Brutus), an easily intell gible device of self-protection. A mad prince is hardl worth murdering. In the Elizabethan stage versio it might still serve, after some false step, as an occasion excuse (cp. here, IV, i, 7-12, and V, ii, 233-239); but it wa sure to arouse the usurper's shrewd suspicions and mak him take measures accordingly.

On the other hand, it could not be given up, being far to effective as well as too firmly counted on in advance by part at least, of the play-going public. So Shakespeare mad (or let) his Hamlet suddenly bethink himself of it and, no les promptly, *assert* its possible "meetness;" and this assertion his audience no doubt took for proof, as countless audience have done since. Not unwisely; for the idea, if it scarcel fits the circumstances, is in character. Think of Hamlet' shaken nerves, his actor's gifts (perceptible in this ver speech, l. 174-177), his instinctive craving for respite (l. 18 190). The line he will thus follow is to him one of littl resistance and much apparent relief.

APPENDIX E

Act II, sc. ii, l. 375-7. As a friend explained to the *Cla* editors, a roused heron would most naturally fly *down* th wind and so, when the breeze was *north-north-west*, toward the forenoon sun. The dazzled falconer might then fin it hard to distinguish the bird pursued from the pursuin hawk. When the wind was "*southerly*", on the contrary the heron, in his flight towards the north, could easily b followed by a sportsman with the sun at his back. To himsel Hamlet, no doubt, adds something like "and, in mos winds, false friends from true."

But to the *definite* assimilation of the pair of spies t hawks it has been objected (J. Goode, *Lit. Times* Feb., 16 1920) that Elizabethan sympathy went to that "straight forward fighter," the hawk (the bird of the Shakespear coat of arms, for example) more than to the heron, a crea ture capable, occasionally, of ignoble tactics.

APPENDIX F

Act. II. sc. II, *l. 470-1.* In *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (resemblances between love-passages in which and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have been recently pointed out by E. I. Fripp), Pyrrhus had first struck off the hands that the "*father of fifty sons*" was holding up to him in trembling supplication.

> At which the frantic Queen leapt on his face,
> And, in his eyelids hanging by the nails,
> A little while prolong'd her husband's life;
> At last the soldiers pull'd her by the heels,
> And swung her howling in the empty air,
> Which sent an echo to the wounded King:
> Whereat he lifted up his bedrid limbs,
> And would have grappled with Achilles' son,
> Forgetting both his want of strength and hands,
> Which he disdaining whisk'd *his sword* about,
> And *with the wind thereof the King fell down.*
> Then from the navel to the throat at once
> He ript old Priam (539-51).

Of which last trait, and also of "*disdaining*", *Macbeth*, I. II, 16-23 (dying Sergeant's speech), may be reminiscent (G. Wilson Knight).

APPENDIX G

Act III, sc. I, *l. 58.* Editors and commentators of the "classical" age were greatly exercised by the "confusion of metaphors," the "mixed metaphor," in this line. The *arms*, however, are not a mere figure of speech (one of them is the "*bodkin*" of l. 76); they are actually to be turned *against* one's self; and as for the *sea of troubles*, it is such a natural image, so readily accepted in consequence, that few unsophisticated readers (and still fewer spectators) will trouble about its *graphical* consistency with the earlier part of the verse.

An allusion has been supposed to those Celtic warriors who, according to Ælian (*Histories*, bk. XII; transl. 1576), would "throw themselves into the foamy floods with their swords drawn in their hands, and shaking their javelins as though they were of force and violence to withstand the rough waves." But would *opposition* effectual enough to *end* the troubles have suggested this reminiscence?

APPENDIX H

Act III, sc. II, *l. 13. Dumb-shows* might symbolize some moral to be drawn from the action of the play (as, owing to Italian influence, before each act of the earliest English neo-Senecan tragedy, *Gorboduc*, 1562); or they might condense, in advance, the action itself (as in this scene, presently); or again (as in the course of the—probably non-Shakespearean—prologue to the second act of *Pericles*) they might present some part of the subject which there was not time to accompany with words.

To that part of the audience whose enjoyment of the performance was largely physical it would matter little that some "shows" should be obscure, "*inexplicable*" (especially if with their "dumbness" they combined "*noise*"—of fighting, "ordnance," or thunder for instance).

APPENDIX I

Act. III, sc. III, *l. 95, hell whereto it goes.* Johnson pronounced this soliloquy "too horrible to be read or to be uttered"; and Garrick let himself be persuaded to omit it. The majority of Victorian—and even of post-Victorian—critics have, more *or* less, refused to believe that what really makes Hamlet spare Claudius, at this supremely critical moment (cp. note on 96), *is* the demoniacal reason that he, however sincerely, gives himself.

That the sentiment is, on the other hand, "far from rare" in Elizabethan literature and drama of a certain type (not to speak of other Renaissance literature and

story). Prof. Stoll has shown, with abundant vigour. Not a few of his readers will subscribe also to a conclusion in which he takes care to distinguish between Elizabethan life and the Elizabethan stage. "Hamlet gives a reason such as was to be expected, not of a gentleman in London or Stratford, but of a character in a revenge tragedy, or in almost any tragedy, of the time." (*Comparative Study of Hamlet*, 1919; cf. the rather trenchant chapter on *Literature and Life*, as antithetic to each other, in *Sh. Studies*, 1927.)

APPENDIX J

Act IV, sc. III, *l. 51.* Mr. Clutton-Brock comments, "It is because the king and his mother *are one flesh* (51) that he would rather escape from them than take revenge; killing is no remedy for that;"—a psychological explanation that may prove more valuable still when, in his last soliloquy (for which audiences apparently cared so little that F does not give it any more than Q^1), Hamlet sets himself the central puzzle of the Shakespearean play and fails to discover any answer (IV, IV, 42-5).

Arguing back strictly from what follows, however, is postulating a degree of consistency sometimes palpably non-existent (cf. Goethe, *Conversations* with Eckermann, 18th April 1827). If the Polonius of what may indeed be called (cp. p. 144 n. 9) *A Father's Advice to his Son, going abroad* (I, III, 58-59) is not *altogether* (Appendix *B.*) unlike the "tedious", dogmatic "old fool" of the rest of the play, has the ingenuity of any critic yet really succeded in reconciling (to take an extreme case) III, I, 79-80, with the speaker's experience in I, V, and other utterances of his, elsewhere?

Here, are we not made to feel that Hamlet (however "*sweet*" the prospect of "blowing" the pair of murderous spies "at the moon" is to him, III, IV, 209) goes because, as he had told his mother (*ibid.* 200), he "*must*"; having no more choice than in Saxo's and Belleforest's story? *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (*Introd.* p. XII n. 2) twice (II, V, and V. I) explicity mentions the constant presence of a numerous guard around the King. Reasons of economy and the-

confidential character of some scenes (at the beginning of this one, the king, in F., enters alone) must have combined, from the first (J. M. Robertson), to limit their actual appearance on the stage. And yet, even in our form of the play have we not had torch-bearers in III, II, and heard, in IV, v, 87-92, of "*Switzers*" and "*officers*," besides courtiers ("*Lords attendant*," F.; cp. p. 245), the sovereign's natural body-guard? Hamlet was described as under arrest in l. 14 (cp. p. 168, n. 3, p. 172, n. 8.); do we *feel* (cp. Ap. *K* § 2) that he is much less so now?

APPENDIX K

Act. V., sc. I, *l. 162.* "*Thirty*" is an impressively round number (cf. the Player King's opening speech, p. 126), and it has been argued, with scholarly ingenuity, by V. Osterberg (1924), that the chronology here is only a piece of "clown's" patter." The deliberateness, however, with which the Grave-digger is made to return to the subject, and (also both in Q^2 and F.) the lapse of time (l. 171-2) since the death of Yorick (whom Hamlet could remember well), will seem to most readers much rather intended to settle the question of Hamlet's age at present.

Did he, on the other hand, in the first act, and generally in the first half of the play, give the *impression* of being quite that? And, in matters literary (matters Shakespearean *not* least) the impression is the main thing. What, also of his "intent in going back to school" (I, II, 112-113 where cp. note), of Laertes' speeches touching "the youth of primy nature" (I, III, 7) and "nature crescent" (l. 11 cp. l. 124), of the age of his fellow-students, Horatio (cp. however, note on I, I, 61), Rosencrantz and Guildenstern not to mention Fortinbras, the still "tender" prince (IV, IV, 46, n.)? Attention has even been called to the probable age of Gertrude, still the object of the passion of Claudius; a less immediate and, in itself, more elusive consideration. Saxo, one may perhaps observe in this connection, had spoken of his Amleth, at the time of the temptation (*Introd.* p. VI), as "*juvenis*" (a word that

he had used also, apparently in the spirit of IV, IV, 46-8, of Horwendil, when he fought and slew Collerj. In Q^1, which has nothing on the date of Hamlet's birth and makes his father's victory a "*dozen year*", old, the Queen had exclaimed at l. 1451 (corresponding to III, IV, 14), "How now, *boy*?"

It has, not unreasonably, been supposed, in consequence, that the Hamlet of the pre-Shakespearean play was a very young man, and that Sh. himself *began* by thinking of him thus, more or less indefinitely: but that, as the play and the character grew under his hands, the hero became for him, more or less consistently, older. "By the time that he got to the Grave-diggers' scene, he told us the Prince was 30; the right age for him then." (Furnivall). Nor would this make the part either psychologically unreal or impossible to act. The authoress of an article on Edwin Booth, the famous American actor, as Hamlet (in 1869), wrote, for instance, "When he lifts his face (from Horatio's shoulder, after the King has fled, III, II, 255), it is one over which ten years have passed" (Furness, vol. II, p. 257).

APPENDIX L

Act V, sc. II, l. 194. Q^2 gives "*prophane and trennowed*:" the first word a then not unusual spelling of "profane," but the last, apparently, a printer's blunder and, to this day, unexplained.

"*Fond and winnowed*," the reading of F., has itself exercised commentator after commentator. "*Fond*" can scarcely have any other sense than its then most common one of "foolish;" if "*and*" was disjunctive, "the most" should normally be repeated before the contrasting epithet; and yet "*winnowed*" (i. e. examined so as to eliminate all worthless elements) would not generally express blame. Conjectural emendations of "*fond*", in consequence, e. g. into "fann'd" (agreeing only too closely with "winnowed"), "sound," or "profound" (suggested by Q^2's "prophane") may, however, be unnecessary. "*And*," if normally conjunctive, makes "*fond*" bear (cp. p. 40 n. 3) on "*winnowed*"

(so as to mean " sifted with silly exquisiteness "); and the " *opinions* " may well be those of most foolishly fastidious " arbiters of elegancies ", to whom " the drossy age " looks up, and by whose standards Osric and his " bevy " repeatedly come off with full success.

Another interpretation takes the " opinions " for those of Osric and his " semblables, " expressed by them, again and again, in suitably frothy phrases. This finds some support in what immediately follows, but less in the general drift and structure of the speech.

APPENDIX M

Act V, sc. II, *l. 287, fat and scant of breath.* After such vehement denunciations of " things rank and gross in nature " (I, II, 136) and of " the fatness of these pursy times " (III, IV, 152), after the biting jibes at " your fat king " (IV, III, 23-24), " the blowt king " (III, IV, 182), that " paddock " (190), it is certainly unexpected that Hamlet himself should be " *fat* " (whilst a degree of stoutness would not be surprising in the easy-going " imperial jointress; " cp. pp. 144 n. 8, 150 n. 4, 152 n. 4).

Emendations have been proposed accordingly. " *Faint,* " at such an early stage of the match, would make him almost contemptible, physically; which Sh. surely did not intend (cp. p. 26 n. 2.)—" *Hot* " (conjectured by Plehwe, 1862) has been ably defended by Prof. Stoll, for example, who argues that, besides not contradicting anything that we know, or might have imagined, of him, it would not only tally with what Claudius had foretold, in IV, VII, 156, and obviously with the need for wiping his forehead now, but also perhaps explain his " not daring " to drink yet (293).

Plausible as all this is, one hesitates to condemn a readi[ng] that has in its favour both folios and quartos (except Q[1], where the remark is not given; cp. p. XIV, n. 9); and it has been suggested that the explanation lay in the physique of the original actor—as was the case, in *L'Avare* of that other actor-playwright Molière, for the lameness of La

Flèche and Harpagon's fits of coughing. Richard Burbage, an English "Roscius" (p. 90 n. 5; cp, p. 223 n. 4), the first to impersonate the Shakespearean Hamlet, was apparently about 35 then; and a degree of (somewhat unhealthy) fatness of body does not seem incompatible with the (rather melancholy) face reproduced, from the Dulwich Picture Gallery, in *Sh.'s England*, vol. II, and J. Q. Adams's *Life of Sh.* Was his "fellow", Sh., here, slyly "poking fun" at the dimension of his "waist-band" (W. W. Greg, *Principles of Emendation in Sh.*, 1928)? The fatness and the consequent, shortness of breath well may, however, have been only relative (cf. p. 26 n. 2, p. 248 n. 8), the Globe Laertes being comparatively spare, with proportionate suppleness.

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— *Macbeth* (Morel).
— *Macbeth* (Castelain).
— *Richard III* (Morel).
— *The Tempest* (Delcourt).
— *As you like it* (Delcourt).
— *Le marchand de Venise* (Delcourt).
— *Hamlet* (Travers).
SHERIDAN : *The School for scandal* (Clermont).
SWIFT : *Gulliver's Travels* (Pons).
TENNYSON : *Enoch Arden* (Al. Beljame).
— *Quatre poèmes* (Vallod).
THACKERAY : *Henry Esmond* (Rivoallan).
WALTER SCOTT : *Contes d'un grand-père* (A. Talandier).
— *Ivanhoé* (Veslot).

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